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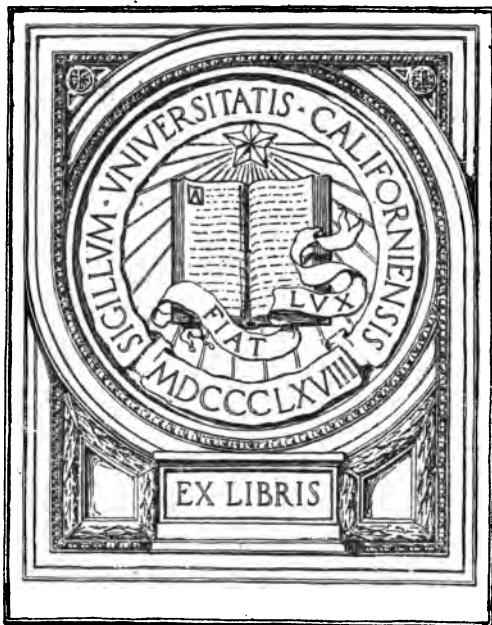
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GREAT AUTHORS  
IN THEIR YOUTH

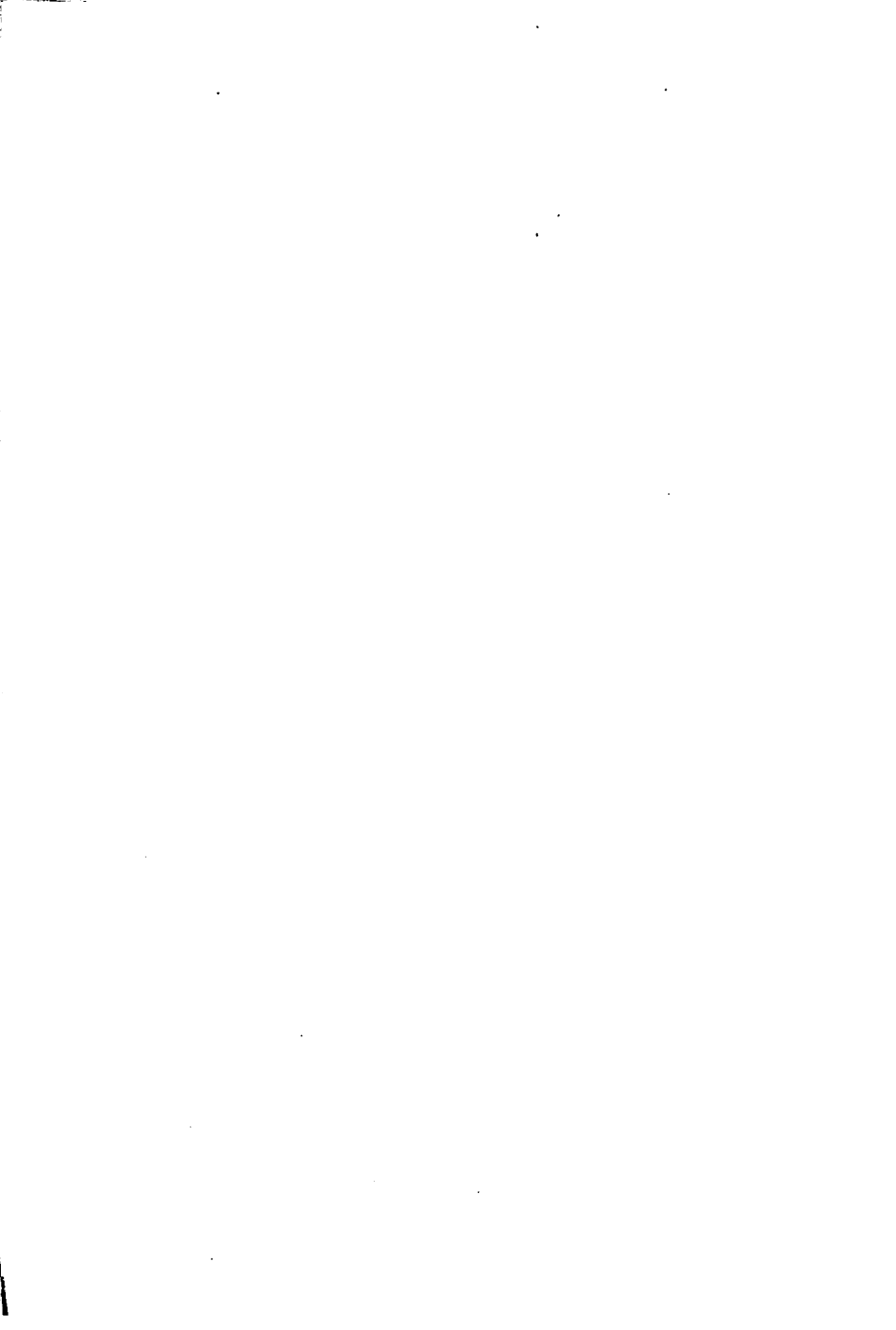


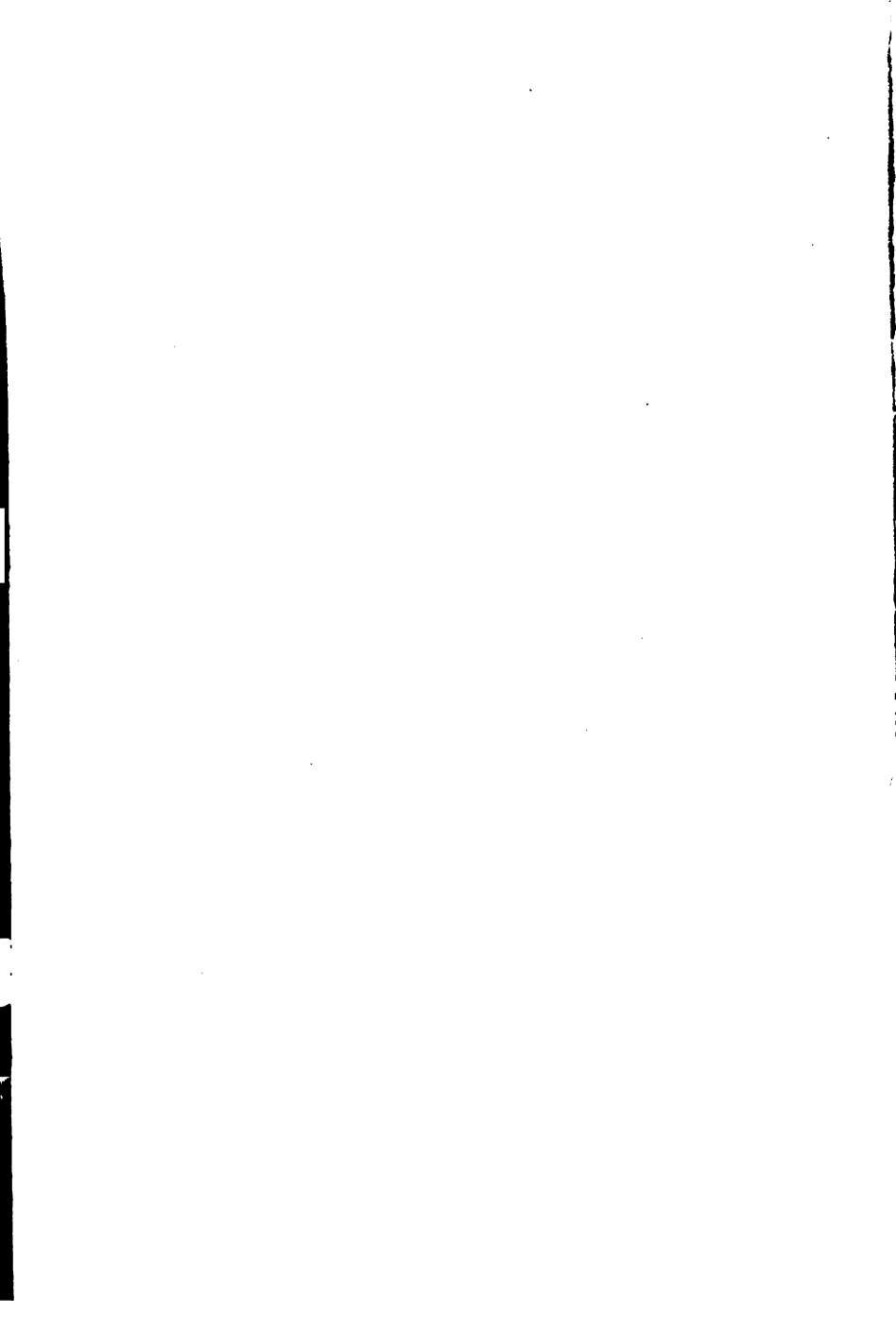
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Sir Walter Scott

From the portrait by Sir John Watson Gordon

# GREAT AUTHORS IN THEIR YOUTH

By

MAUDE MORRISON FRANK

Author of "Short Plays about Famous Authors"

*Illustrated*



OF  
CALIFORNIA

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## PREFACE

THIS is a book of beginnings, since it tells of the early life of some great authors. Yet it is the beginning that counts, says the French proverb. In these records of youthful days we come closer to the things that make one life different from another; we watch the troubles and triumphs of childhood that teach one novelist the story of David Copperfield's varied fortunes and another the strange eventful history of Jane Eyre; we wander with one young poet through the quiet country of "The Brook," and with another boyish lover of romance over the rugged hillsides of the land of "Marmion." The stored-up memories of their early years have always been the true treasure-house of great authors, and to know the story of their youth is to have the key to an enchanted door.

In gathering together whatever has gone to the making of this book of youthful lives for youthful readers the writer has gleaned in many fields. Not only from the great biographies that are themselves famous in literature, but from many lesser books, as well as from sketches and essays, and from letters and journals of the authors themselves, have come the facts, the bits of anecdote, and the kindly recollections that tell the story of a

life. And there has been, besides, the open book of the places that belong to the authors' lives, nearly all of which have been visited by the writer as a pilgrim in search of truth. Of the printed books that have been the writer's most helpful guides to a knowledge of the early lives of our authors, a list is given elsewhere. It may be that some readers of this little volume will follow these guides further, and so set boldly out on the pathway to that pleasant land of book-lovers in which the names of authors are the names of friends.

M. M. F.

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## WALTER SCOTT

OF all the famous cities in the world, Edinburgh is surely the best to be a boy in. In other cities a boy must keep to prim streets or else wander far for his freedom, but in Edinburgh the great wall of rock with the wonderful castle crowning it, and the hills and rugged crags with the winding paths across them, are all part of the town itself; and an Edinburgh boy can be a mountaineer and an explorer, and all the while dwell soberly in a populous city.

The Scottish capital to-day is more like other cities than it was a few generations ago. Many of the steep, narrow wynds or alleys have disappeared, and wider, healthier streets have taken their place. The fine new town that has sprung up at the foot of the Castle Rock has long outmatched the gray city on the hill in size. But luckily for those of us who love stories, not too many of these changes were made at the time when a lame boy named Walter Scott was roaming about the fascinating regions in and near the old town, learning

## WALTER SCOTT

more history than was in any lesson-book ever printed, and inventing strange and romantic tales to fit the picturesque places that he visited on his endless rambles. "He was making himself all the time," as someone said of him later, and Edinburgh counted for much in the making of the writer who came to be called, as indeed he was in very truth, "the Wizard of the North."

It was in an old house in a passage called College Wynd that Walter Scott was born, in 1771. The very place of his birth gave him a share in Scottish history, for the houses in College Wynd were built over the spot once known as the Kirk o' Field, where Darnley, the unfortunate young husband of Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots, met his death. But, these historic and picturesque wynds were not without dangers for their dwellers. A population of seventy thousand people was crowding itself into the mile of length and half-mile of breadth that was at this time the full extent of the city of Edinburgh. Small wonder that in the narrow passages the houses grew taller and taller, shutting out light and air from the street beneath. Some of the houses, a modern writer tells us, were like vertical streets, so many people lived in them, huddling together in a curious inconvenient, happy-

go-lucky fashion that often brought rich and poor together under a single roof. In those days it was not uncommon for the best known families in Edinburgh—"kent folk," as they were called—to be established on the sixth or seventh floor of a house that accommodated a cobbler plying his trade in one or two dark and dirty rooms on the ground floor.

With all this crowding, cheerful and sociable though it was, the health of many a family of children suffered. There was less history in the new squares that were being laid out to the south of the Castle, but purer air could be breathed in them. And so, a little while after Walter Scott's birth, his parents left College Wynd, where several little sons and daughters had died in infancy, for a roomy house in one of the pleasantest of the newer régions that were fast transforming the ancient town. Walter's two elder brothers thrived in the comfortable George Square home, and so at first did Walter, who was the liveliest and most frolicsome of youngsters until he was about eighteen months old. Then, after a slight illness of a few days, he became unable to move his right leg. No one seemed able to find a cure for the sudden lameness. When more than a year had passed and Walter was no better,

Mrs. Scott's father, who was a skillful physician, Dr. Rutherford by name, recommended country air as a remedy worth trying, and Walter was sent to his grandfather Scott's farm at Sandyknowe, not far from Edinburgh. The keen, fresh breezes that



EDINBURGH CASTLE

blew over the crags of Sandyknowe proved the best of all medicines, as the wise grandfather physician had predicted, and the little invalid grew by slow degrees into a sturdy, hearty lad. His lameness never wholly left him, but it did not prevent him from taking the long walks that later gave him his wonderful knowledge of the countryside. Nor indeed did it prevent him from sharing in the school-

boy encounters in which he took as much delight as if the champions of the school yard had been his only heroes.

There could have been no better home than Sandyknowe for the little boy who was to grow up to write stirring poems about old castles and stern fortresses. On a great gray rock near the farmhouse, like a sentinel on the hill, was the romantic ruin of Smailholme, a true part of the past that Scott always loved so well. In centuries gone by it had seen many a spirited encounter between the Scottish clans and the English invaders. Now sheep browsed peacefully among the ruins, and the lame child, set down in the turf that softened the rough rock into beauty, rolled joyfully about the grass, making friends with the ewes and lambs, as indeed he did all his life long with all dumb creatures, horses, dogs, nay, even hens and pigs. He would remain there for hours in perfect content. Once, when a thunderstorm came on, in the general hurry to get to shelter, he was forgotten by the servants. His aunt, hastening out to the hills to rescue him, found him, it is said, quite happy, clapping his hands at the lightning, and crying, "Bonny, bonny!" at every flash.

Within doors as well as without, Sandyknowe

Farm helped in the making of the future poet. From his grandmother he heard the tales of the Border heroes, merry outlaws, Scotch Robin Hoods like Johnny Armstrong or his own ancestor, Walter Scott of Harden. His aunt, Miss Janet Scott, whom he loved dearly, and always remembered affectionately, was never tired of reading to him, nor was he ever tired of listening. Old ballads and bits of ancient Scottish history he especially loved to hear. His first favorite, the ballad of "Hardyknute," he knew by heart before he could read, and would go about the house shouting out the sonorous opening lines:

"Stately stepped he east the ha',  
And stately stepped he west,  
Full seventy years he now had seen  
With scarce seven years of rest."

This habit was, as he himself tells us, much to the annoyance of the parish minister, who did not like having his talk interrupted by the noisy little boy, and who complained, not without reason, that "one might as well speak in the mouth of a cannon as where that child was." The worthy gentleman, it is pleasant to know, got over his displeasure at the interruptions and became one of the most honored friends of Scott's later life.

After a year or more of Sandyknowe, a visit to the English city of Bath made a real traveler of the Scotch laddie. The water of the famous springs had been recommended as a cure for the lameness which was still rather troublesome. In those days, before railroads had been heard of, a sea-voyage to London was the best way to begin a journey from Scotland to Bath, and to London Walter was taken. Here he saw all the sights, Westminster Abbey, the Tower, and the rest, with such observing eyes that on his next visit to London, twenty-five years later, he found that he recollected them perfectly.

At Bath Walter was given his first glimpse of the theater, when he was taken to see Shakespeare's "As You Like It." All the wonderful doings at the Court of the Duke and in the Forest of Arden were thoroughly real to him, and when Orlando and his elder brother Oliver quarreled he was so shocked that he screamed out, "Ain't they brothers?" But when he went back to his father's house in Edinburgh, his own elder brother, Robert, who must have been something of a bully, taught him that a quarrel between brothers was not so unusual as he had thought. Indeed, one of the first lessons he had to learn upon leaving Sandyknowe for Edin-



burgh was how to play his part as one of a large family of children. He had been a little spoiled by his grandmother and aunt; at least so he tells us in his lines:

“ For I was wayward, bold and wild,  
A self-will’d imp, a grandam’s child,  
But half a plague and half a jest,  
Was still endured, beloved, caressed.”

Neither then nor later, however, was the self-will of which he accuses himself shown so as to cause anyone a moment’s real grief. “ God bless thee, Walter, my man,” said an old uncle to him when he had grown to be the most famous man in all Scotland, “ Thou hast risen to be great, but thou wast always good.”

Soon after the stay at Bath was ended, it came to be time to begin the business of Walter’s education in a serious fashion. But his aunt’s lessons and his own reading had already taught him a whole world of knowledge that would make a six-year-old of to-day seem almost impossibly learned. Even in those days, when little folks worked over lessons at an age which in this twentieth century would find them still at play in the nursery, Walter’s acquaintance with books often aston-

ished strangers and friends alike. A lady who afterwards came to know him very well visited his home at a time when she was making a short stay in Edinburgh. What she thought of Walter is told in a letter she wrote the next day. "I last night supped at Mr. Walter Scott's," she wrote. "He has the most extraordinary genius of a boy I ever saw. He was reading a poem to his mother when I went in. I made him read on; it was the description of a shipwreck. His passion rose with the storm. He lifted his eyes and hands. 'There's the mast gone,' he says; 'crash it goes!—they will all perish!' After his agitation, he turns to me. 'That is too melancholy,' says he; 'I had better read you something more amusing.' I preferred a little chat, and asked his opinion of Milton and other books he was reading, which he gave with wonderful intelligence. When taken to bed last night, he told his aunt he liked that lady. 'What lady?' says she. 'Why, Mrs. Cockburn; for I think she is a virtuoso like myself.' 'Dear Walter,' says Aunt Jenny, 'what is a virtuoso?' 'Don't you know? Why, it is one who wishes to know and will know everything.'" At the time when he discussed Milton with his mother's guest, he was six years and three months old.

Another story which shows how much poetry and poets had already come to mean to the little boy is told by a lady who knew him at about the same time. He was visiting her in the beautiful country house which he afterwards described in his famous novel, "Waverley," and was sitting at the gate with his nurse when a forlorn old beggar came up and asked for alms. When the poor man had gone, the nurse said to Walter that he ought to be glad that fate had not made him a beggar. "Homer was a beggar," instantly responded the little fellow. "How do you know that?" asked the lady who tells the story. "Why, don't you remember?" said Walter,

"Seven Roman cities strove for Homer dead,  
Through which the living Homer begged his bread."

They were Greek cities, not Roman, to be sure, but how many six-year-olds, or twelve-year-olds, could have managed to make the same mistake in the same way?

In spite of all this knowledge, however, when Walter began to go to school—the famous High School of Edinburgh—he made, as he himself tells us, "a brighter figure in the yards than in the class." The boys found him the best of companions,

while the master did not always find him the best of scholars. His wonderful memory, out of which no bit of history or line of poetry that he had learned or heard ever faded, did not make him the leader of a class which concerned itself chiefly with Latin grammar. His place was usually about the middle of the class, well below the "dux" or head boy, and not always far removed from the "dult's" or "dolt's" bench. This central position satisfied him well enough as a rule, because it was near the fire. Sometimes, however, he became a little more ambitious, and once gained a higher place by a clever trick which he told of in later life, half in amusement and half in repentance.

A boy who sat at the head of Walter's division of the class had kept his place for days and days, never failing to answer the master's most difficult questions, and never giving Walter a chance to move up to the top. One day Walter noticed that whenever the invincible leader stood up to recite he fumbled with a particular button on his waistcoat. Watching his chance, Walter slyly cut off the helpful button, and waited eagerly to see what would happen. When the boy's turn came, he stood up, felt for the button as usual, and missing it, stammered and sat down. Walter answered the ques-

tion and took the coveted place at the head. The vanquished "dux" did not suspect who had done the mischief, nor did Walter ever confess, though he always hoped for some opportunity of making up to his victim for the lost honors.

But it was only seldom that Walter troubled himself about such matters as being head or foot of the class. Most of the time, as he tells us, he glanced like a meteor from one end of the class to the other. If the master asked for an out-of-the-way bit of knowledge, Walter was sure to be ready with the answer; but if the day's task was called for, the place won so easily was apt to be lost with equal ease. He was the historian of the class, even the master admitted, but not the grammarian, although he could translate Latin poetry very neatly. Once, indeed, he narrowly escaped being a prize-winner for a translation of some lines of Vergil about an eruption of Mount Etna. It was on this occasion that the headmaster, or Rector, the famous Dr. Adam, showed his good judgment by declaring that *Gualterus Scott*, though he might not understand the Latin grammar so well as some of his comrades, was behind few in following and enjoying the author's meaning.

Here is a description which tells us how Walter

was dressed when he attended the Edinburgh High School. It is taken from the account given by Lord Cockburn, who joined the school a very few years later than Scott's day. "I often think I see myself in my usual High School apparel, which was the common dress hat; a shirt fastened at the neck by a black ribbon, and except on dress days, unruffled; a cloth waistcoat, rather large, with two rows of buttons and of button-holes, so that it could be buttoned on either side, which, when one side got dirty, was convenient; a single-breasted jacket, which in due time got a tail and became a coat; brown corduroy breeks, tied at the knees by a showy knot of brown tape; worsted stockings in winter, blue cotton stockings in summer, and white cotton for dress; clumsy shoes made to be used on either foot, and each requiring to be used on alternate feet daily; brass or copper buckles. The coat and waistcoat were always of glaring colors, such as bright blue, grass green, and scarlet. I remember well the pride with which I was once rigged out in a scarlet waistcoat and a bright green coat."

The contests of the classroom were not nearly so interesting to Walter as those of the yards or playgrounds. His comrades would have thought no ill of him, had he, lame as he was, kept out of the

combats which were then the chief delight of the High School lads. But he would have no allowance made for him because of his lameness. The first boy whom he challenged declined to fight with a cripple, whereupon Walter, his pride sadly hurt by the imputation of weakness, demanded the privilege of fighting "mounted." The elder boys accordingly tied the two little fellows—Scott was barely seven—to a board. The fight thereupon proceeded in approved and honorable fashion and Walter's dignity was appeased, at the expense, however, of a bloody nose. He was thereafter, to his great satisfaction, recognized as a "bonny fechter."

Climbing as well as fighting made life interesting for the active Edinburgh schoolboys, and here again the lame lad did not rest until he had earned the reputation of being as daring a climber as the surest-footed of his mates. He took special delight in the most difficult bit of mountaineering which the Castle Rock afforded, the climbing of the "kittle nine stanes"—"kittle" or "ticklish" because of their dangerous height and steepness. Most of all, however, he enjoyed being one of the crew of school-boy rebels who in winter garrisoned the "Cowgate Port," the old gate in the high wall overlooking the crowded section south of the Castle, and dis-

charged volley after volley of snowballs at the Highland guards who tried to dislodge them.

Sometimes real fighting grew out of the "bickers" or boyish contests of which the Edinburgh lads were never weary. In the preface to "Waverley" there is the story of an encounter which resulted in the discovery of a true hero in the person of one of the enemy. The boys of the fashionable George Square, in which was Walter's home, had a feud with the boys who lived in the poorer streets near by. The leader of the rougher army was a splendid fighter whom his opponents had christened Greenbreeks, because of his green cloth trousers. Greenbreeks had once nearly put the George Square aristocrats to flight, when one of them, who had foolishly armed himself with a short sword, struck his pursuer with it and laid him low. This was a burst of genuine warfare which the young combatants had not bargained for. Stone-throwing might be indulged in safely enough, but sword-cuts were another story, and the owner of the sword was in great terror both of his parents and the law. But the young gentlemen of the Square soon found that they had to deal with an honorable enemy. Greenbreeks was taken to the hospital to recover from his injury, which was



luckily only slight. No one, however, could induce him to tell who it was that had dealt him the blow. After his leaving the hospital, Walter, who had been one of the retreating party, offered him some money as a reward for his silence, but he refused to accept anything but a pound of snuff for his grandmother or old aunt. Perhaps the story should have concluded with the statement that the poor boys and the prosperous ones became friends, but friendship would have put an end to the fighting, and the warlike young Scotsmen on both sides would have counted that a grievous loss.

Eager sharer in these lively skirmishes that he was, no one could have been gentler than the child Walter Scott was at most times. His parents, very wisely, no doubt, in view of all the attractions of "bickers" and rock-climbing, had engaged an excellent tutor to see that the four boys did not neglect their studies. Only once did this gentleman have to find serious fault with Walter. Even then his displeasure did not last long, for the delinquent pupil, on being told that he deserved punishment, sprang up, threw his arms about his tutor's neck and kissed him! One may be sure that the other boys were not present when the little "fechter" of the yards showed his soft-heartedness

in this fashion. But the soft-heartedness could be transformed into something very different indeed on occasions. In the happy though strict home life that Walter led there was little to rouse the spirit of bitterness or anger. Nevertheless, he could not see an act of cruelty or injustice without fiercely resenting it. In the Sandyknowe days, a rough country relation once wantonly killed a pet starling which Walter had partly tamed. "I flew at his throat like a wild-cat, and was torn from him with no little difficulty," he wrote in his journal fifty years afterwards, when the death of the slayer of the bird had reminded him of the incident.

At home there were lighter studies, such as music and drawing, to serve as a sort of relief from the monotonous Latin and Greek of the High School. There were even private theatricals from time to time, the dining-room being the theater and Walter the stage manager. When "Richard III" was the play, Walter always acted the part of the hump-backed Richard, since, as he said, "the limp would do well enough to represent the hump." The drawing was less successful than the theatricals, for, much to his regret, Walter never became enough of a draughtsman even to sketch the places he visited in his rambles. But he hit upon a curious device for

strengthening his memory of what he saw. From every place of interest he would carry off a piece of a branch of a tree, calling the collection his "log-book." Of these bits of historical wood he planned to make a set of chessmen, having the kings and queens cut from a branch that had grown near a palace, the bishops from one that had shaded an abbey, and so on, keeping up the appropriateness as far as possible, even including the pawns, which were to come from miscellaneous places having some connection with history. It is a great pity that this fascinating set of chessmen never, after all, got any further than Walter's fancy.

If drawing lessons could not make Walter an artist, neither could music lessons make him a singer or a performer, for he was very decidedly unmusical. His brothers, or at any rate two of them, Robert being something of an exception, were equally so, as the following anecdote proves. Mrs. Scott, who was anxious that her sons should learn singing, employed a skillful musician to teach them. The result must have been discouraging to the ambitious mother, for after a few lessons the next-door neighbor sent "to beg that the boys might not all be flogged at precisely the same hour, as though she had no doubt that the punishment was

deserved, the noise of the concord was really frightful."

Half a dozen years of Edinburgh and the rough-and-ready High School had passed since Walter had left the care of his kind aunt, Miss Janet Scott. Though he had become much stronger, he was now growing so fast that there was once more danger of his falling ill. So the town was again exchanged for a country home, this time at Kelso, a little to the south of Edinburgh, where his aunt had removed after the death of her mother. Here the days were spent happily and profitably though, as usual, Walter learned far more out of school hours than in them. He had a kind and good master, whose curious name was Launcelot Whale. Mr. Whale, who was exceedingly mild-tempered, except when some one ventured upon an allusion to Jonah in his presence, helped Walter to progress very considerably in Latin, and besides, gave him the privilege of hearing the younger boys recite their lessons, an occupation which the youthful teacher no doubt much preferred to studying his own.

At Kelso Walter formed a friendship that counted, as boyish friendships sometimes do, throughout the entire course of his life. But in the days when the friendship began, Scott little dreamed

that it would end by bringing him at once his greatest sorrow and his greatest glory. The story is one that all the world is proud to remember. When Sir Walter, who had long been rich and famous through his writings, was nearing old age and weakened and worn by sickness, the news of the failure of a publishing house in which he was a partner came upon him like a crushing blow. But at once he roused himself with all the courage that had belonged to his eager youth and, taking upon himself of his own free will the task of paying the immense debt incurred by his partners, set himself again to write, saying: "This right hand shall work it off." There were six long years of toil with his pen, "for honor's sake," but at the end he left a name to be loved and revered by his countrymen as the name of no other writer has ever been, nor, it is safe to say, can ever be.

The names of the two partners whose failure brought Scott so much misfortune were James and John Ballantyne, and it was on the benches of the Kelso grammar school that the friendship with James, the elder of the brothers, began. James liked nothing better than to listen to a story and Walter liked nothing better than to tell one, and so, if the pair were not well matched, they were well

met. Almost every day in school, as soon as Walter had finished his none too difficult task, he would whisper to Ballantyne, "Come slink over beside me, Jamie, and I'll tell you a story"; and the two were soon happy among knights and warriors of their own creation, doing desperately heroic deeds on imaginary battlefields. A few years later, in Edinburgh, Walter found another friend who shared his fondness for stories, but who could invent them as well as listen. The two lads spent all their holidays rambling about picturesque places near Edinburgh, such as Salisbury Crags and Arthur's Seat, taking turns at telling each other the most romantic tales of adventure and enchantment that their eager brains could think of. Like the stories in "The Arabian Nights," these wild tales sometimes remained unfinished at the end of the day, and were continued from one holiday to the next. It was not because of lack of practice in story-telling that Scott did not become a novelist before becoming a poet!

But the best of all the gifts that the free days at Kelso brought was an acquaintance with the fascinating book which opened the eyes of so many readers of those days to much that was beautiful. A few years before this time, the clergyman who

afterwards became known as Bishop Percy had published a wonderful collection of old ballads, in a volume called, "Reliques of Ancient Poetry." The book soon became famous, and thousands of readers delighted in the stirring verses that told the history and the legends of past centuries in the very words belonging to the times themselves. These ballads were what Walter had always loved—indeed, at ten, he had begun to collect such penny and halfpenny sheets of them as he was able to buy in the streets of Edinburgh. But to find hundreds of them brought together in a single volume was to have treasure-trove indeed. When the book fell into his hands he forgot everything else in his happiness, and lying under a great platanus (or plane-tree) in a garden that sloped down to the River Tweed, he read and read, past his dinner hour, until he had "tired the sun with reading, and sent him down the sky." Forty years later, revisiting Kelso, he sought eagerly for the tree under whose shade he had first read Percy's "Reliques" and grieved greatly to find it gone.

From Kelso and its happy associations Scott passed before he was fourteen to the University of Edinburgh, where, though he held his own bravely enough in philosophy, he neglected his

Greek so persistently as to manage to earn the title of the "Greek Blockhead." At the conclusion of his Greek studies he roused the professor's wrath by writing an essay to prove that Homer, of whom he knew next to nothing, was far inferior to the Italian poet Ariosto, about whom he had gathered a surprising amount of information. "A dunce he was, and a dunce he would remain," was the professor's indignant comment upon the audacious young critic. The time came, though it was many a year later, when the professor admitted that his old pupil was anything but a dunce, while Scott, for his part, thought regretfully of his obstinate neglect of the professor's beloved Greek.

But the gallant champion of Italian poetry soon found himself concerned with matters quite unpoetic. When he was a little more than fifteen, his father, who had always destined him for the law, gave him his choice between the two branches of the legal profession as it was practised in Scotland. Mr. Scott was himself a Writer to the Signet, a lawyer wholly occupied in preparing legal documents. Walter, though he well understood that following in his father's footsteps might bring him more of fortune, chose instead the career of an advocate, which would give him the greater dis-



tion that comes of being a pleader in court. For the spirited lad, who, lame as he was, had always felt keener pleasure in climbing dangerous crags than in quieter and safer pursuits, the decision was a natural one. Whatever of adventure belonged to the life of a Scottish lawyer in those days was certainly to be found in the encounters of the court room, where readiness and quickness of wit often availed to snatch an unexpected victory.

And so the greatest romancer that the world has ever known was pledged to the unromantic study of the law, beginning his career by spending five long years at office drudgery as his father's apprentice. He heartily disliked the tedious task of copying endless documents, yet never did man, young or old, toil more faithfully than the lad who had been an idler on the benches of school and college. Once, indeed, he performed the feat of copying one hundred and twenty folio pages without a single pause for rest. In his own words, "when he was actually at the oar, no man could pull harder than he." We who know his later life might add that his hand never left the oar when a stroke of his was needed to bring others safely to harbor.

For all his amazing industry in his father's office,

the corners of Walter's desk held many a proof that his boyish tastes were never forgotten. Tales of adventure were as dear to his heart as ever and dry morsels of legal knowledge were by no means the whole of his diet, for some fascinating volume of stories or poems was sure to be where his hand could find it easily. It was in his early apprentice days that his wide reading in out-of-the-way poetry brought the lad the notice of no less a person than the poet Burns. He had long desired to see the great man, and when at last good fortune made him a shy guest at a gathering of notable people in the poet's honor, he was all rapt interest and eager attention. But soon the youngest of the guests became something more than a reverent onlooker. The attention of Burns had been called to a pathetic picture of loss and sorrow, beneath which was written a stanza from an unknown poem. As Burns gazed, his eyes filled with tears and he wondered who the author of the lines might be. There was silence in the room until Scott from his modest corner whispered the name to his nearest neighbor. He never forgot the flashing look of gratitude from Burns's magnificent eyes, nor the brief word of praise that fell to his lot on that happy occasion.

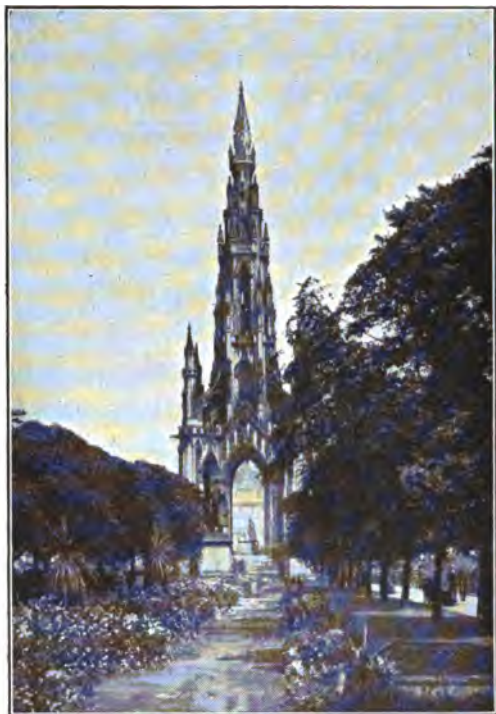
It is in "Redgauntlet," one of the best-loved of the Waverley Novels, that Scott sets forth with much humor his own trials in the days when his ever-growing love for romantic tales and wanderings must sometimes have made the law seem but a stern taskmistress. The portraits in the novel are all taken from life. Alan Fairford is Scott himself. Mr. Fairford is drawn from Scott's own father, anxious for his son's best interests, and jealous of every moment stolen from the legal studies which are, in his eyes, the chief glory of life and the only path to honor. To the hero, Darsie Latimer, Scott gives the lovable nature and gifts for friendship that belonged to William Clarke, his own closest comrade of those days. The elder Fairford, like Scott's own father, has little respect for his son's wanderings—"raids," Scott used to call them. To him, a young man "who cannot amuse himself with the law" is a strange creature, and in his keen anxiety for his son's welfare, he questions him sharply: "Do you remember that you are studying law, Sir? that your Scots trials are coming on, Sir? And have you leisure to leave your books behind you for so many hours?" To all of which Alan makes the best answer he can, wishing all the time, as Scott himself must often have done, that his father would

allow him a little more freedom, if only that he might give him pleasure by obeying willingly.

And like Mr. Fairford again, Scott's father must have reckoned amiss, for Scott, no more lacking in practical good sense than Alan in the novel, persevered with his legal studies until he had gained a place which brought him honor and a comfortable livelihood as well. For many years he held the post of Sheriff of Selkirkshire and it was as "The Shirra" that he always liked best to be known to the people of that much-loved countryside. But all the while he was learning to be a writer, "in vacation time." His best vacations in those busy years were often wanderings of the spirit which carried his thoughts far afield while he was to all appearances duly following the course of a trial in Parliament House. By that time he had learned that he could fashion a description of a rocky glen or of the sheen of the moonlight on a foaming waterfall quite as happily within that stern hall of justice as out-of-doors, until the cross-grained judge broke into his reverie by demanding with a fierce grunt: "Well! where are your cautioners?"

When Walter Scott in his early manhood found his way into print it was through the picturesque gateway of ballad poetry. To translate the German

romantic ballads that seemed to him so full of beauty was an early labor of love from which he passed to the happy task of collecting his favorite



THE SCOTT MEMORIAL  
Edinburgh

Scotch ballads into a volume to which he gave the title, "Border Minstrelsy." Next came his own

splendid versions of the ancient tales of the countryside, told first in ringing verse in his famous poems, "The Lay of the Last Minstrel," "Marmion," and "The Lady of the Lake"; and in later days in the great series of novels beginning with "Waverley."

Old tales, old songs, old books—all things belonging to the past were dear to Walter Scott in his boyhood, and because of his love for them he made in his manhood a wonderful new world for all lovers of romance. A splendid memorial to Sir Walter Scott the writer looks down from the noble avenue called Prince's Street upon his own city of Edinburgh. But his best memorial will always be the Waverley Novels, the books in which he gave to his readers, young and old, all that Scotland had given to him when he was young.



## ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

THE seaman whose ocean path lies near the coast of Scotland must thread his way among many islands great and small, some green and fertile, others bleak and barren. On one of the rocky islands east of the Firth of Forth, and full eleven miles from the nearest shore, rises a tall tower of stone and iron, the famous Bell Rock Lighthouse, built in 1807 by the great engineer Robert Stevenson. No lighthouse had ever before been placed so far out at sea or upon so dangerous a spot, and Robert Stevenson won widespread fame for the erection of the pillar that was to abolish the toll of lives taken by the hitherto unlighted rock. Before his active career was ended, he had built a score of lighthouses on islands lying close to the Scotch coast, and each year, until prevented by the illness that was to be his last, he went on a tour of inspection about the shore that he had done so much to make safe for seamen. On one of these voyages he had as a guest the greatest of all his countrymen, Sir Walter Scott, who was then planning to write the



poem, "The Lord of the Isles." It was on that occasion that Sir Walter inscribed in the album at the Bell Rock Lighthouse some lines always counted by Robert Stevenson among the highest of his honors:

"Far in the bosom of the deep,  
O'er these wild shelves my watch I keep,  
A ruddy gem of changeful light,  
Bound on the dusky brow of night.  
The seaman bids my luster hail,  
And scorns to strike his timorous sail."

Thomas Stevenson, the son of the courageous lighthouse builder, also became a successful engineer, and when it came to his turn to guide his own son in the choice of a career, he would gladly have seen him an active member of the family profession. But the son of Thomas Stevenson was Robert Louis Stevenson, the beloved "R. L. S." of thousands upon thousands of readers, and it was to be his chosen task to build in words rather than in iron and granite.

Like Scott, Robert Louis Stevenson belonged to Edinburgh, and knew and loved almost as well as Sir Walter himself the gray city on which the romantic castle looks down from its frowning height.

The last Edinburgh dweller who could boast of having seen Sir Walter Scott passed away some few years ago, but there are living in Edinburgh to-day

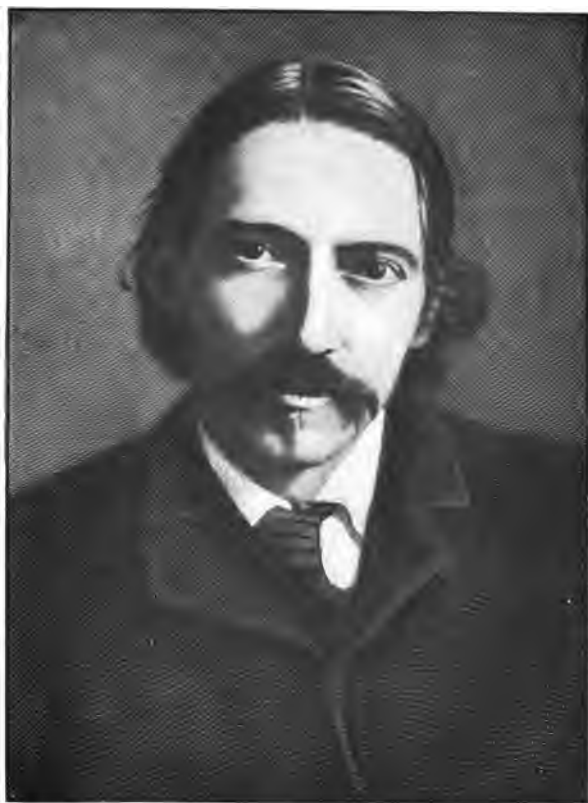


**BIRTHPLACE OF ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON**  
8 Howard Place, Edinburgh

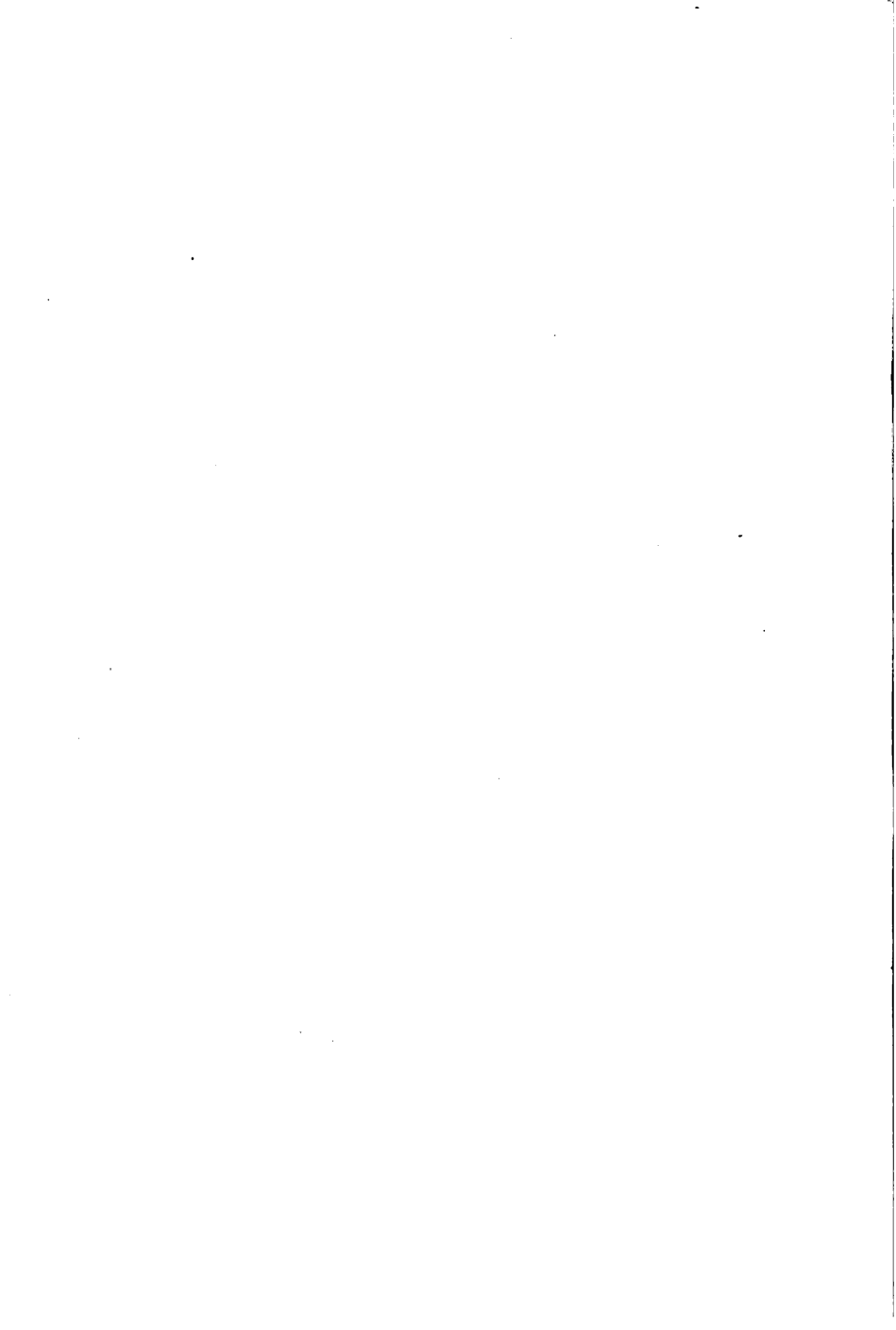
many who knew Stevenson in his boyhood. It was in 1850, eighteen years after Scott's death, that Robert Louis was born in the two-story stone house at 8 Howard Place, where his mother and father had begun their married life two years before. The

engineer grandfather had died a few months earlier, but there was a clergyman grandfather, the Reverend Lewis Balfour, who came from his manse at Colinton to baptize the infant "Robert Lewis Balfour"—good Scotch names all three, and belonging to the little Scotchman by right of inheritance. Late in their owner's boyhood, the change of the spelling "Lewis" to "Louis," and the dropping of the "Balfour," finally gave the name the form that is most familiar to us. As there was another Robert in the family, Lewis or Lew was the name by which the future writer was always known in his home and to his friends. But for the first dozen years of his life there was no question of either Robert or Lewis. His father had amused himself by calling the youngster "Smout" or "Smoutie," and the name clung to him until he was about twelve, when he hit upon the businesslike plan of putting an end to the undignified form of address by demanding a fine of a penny from everyone who used it.

"I am one of the few people who do not forget their own lives," said "R. L. S.," in a letter written long after the Edinburgh days, and, indeed, no writer has ever told us more about his own childhood. But the childhood that Louis, to give him



Robert Louis Stevenson  
From a photograph by James Notman



his home name, remembered so vividly was not without drawbacks to its happiness. Love and devoted care the only child of the prosperous Edinburgh household had in abundance. Yet not all the affection that surrounded him could give health to the feeble little boy, who had to learn very early to endure sharp and often-recurring attacks of illness. He endured them bravely enough, and forgot them whenever he could, in his boyhood as in his manhood, but they shut him away from many pleasures. He had to practise patience, and to find within the four walls of a sick-room the world of adventure and marvels in which he delighted. One of a numerous family of cousins—his mother and his father as well had each no fewer than twelve brothers and sisters—he was the invalid among a hearty crew, a child who had most often to nurse his health while the others were romping. Yet he earned the comradeship of the sturdier youngsters by his spirited playing of whatever small part he was able to take in their doings, and still more by taking them into the “land of make-believe” that he created by inventing wonderful tales, generally of sea-rovers, savages, and seekers for buried treasure. Memories of the listening groups of cousins must have been fresh

in his mind when in later life he planned the book which was to be his first real success in literature and the best boys' story of modern times as well—"Treasure Island."

There are in Louis's writings many reminiscences of these early days of ailing health, and few pages are without a grateful mention of one name which is honored by all who care for "R. L. S."—the name of Alison Cunningham, his well-beloved nurse. "Cummy," he called her in his grown-up days as in his childhood, and as "Cummy" she is known to the readers of the delightful letters that are not the least worth knowing of his works. Alison Cunningham, bright-faced, strong, and warm-hearted, came to the Stevenson household when the little boy was but eighteen months old, and cared for him during the long days and sleepless nights of his many illnesses so patiently and lovingly as to earn by very right the title of "second mother" with which he repaid her devotion.

He never forgot how great a debt he owed her. At twenty, an age when life beckons so eagerly to young men as to leave them scant leisure for remembering the elders whom they seem to have left behind in their journey, he wrote: "Do not suppose that I shall ever forget those bitter nights, when I

coughed and coughed, and was so unhappy, and you were so patient and loving with a poor sick child. Indeed, Cummy, I wish I might become a man worth



ALISON CUNNINGHAM (CUMMY)

talking of, if it were only that you should not have thrown away your pains." More than twenty years later, with "the thick of the world between them,"



the same memories were in his mind when he wrote loving letters to her from Samoa, far off in the Pacific Ocean. And the volume of poems by which he is known to children all over the world, the "Child's Garden of Verses," bears the dedication "To Alison Cunningham, from her Boy."

Cummy survived her nursling nineteen years. In the summer of 1913 she died, after having lived out her long life in Edinburgh, happy in her recollections of her laddie, who had grown so famous and who had always loved her so well. He gave her a claim on the affection of all children when, in the last lines of the pretty dedication that was hers, he wished that they might hear his rhymes read to them in

"As kind a voice  
As made my childish days rejoice."

For a whole delightful year, when Louis was six, he had for his nursery companion not only Cummy, who could tell tales in a splendidly dramatic fashion, but the one among his cousins who afterwards became his special intimate. This comrade was another Robert Stevenson,—“Bob”—whom lovers of art know as Robert Alan Mowbray

Stevenson, the brilliant art critic. Bob, too, knew the delights of pretending, and there was nothing in the precise, orderly life of the two little lads that did not take color from being looked at through the bright-hued glasses of imagination. In a famous essay on "Child's Play," Louis tells how the porridge which arrives with monotonous regularity at every Scottish breakfast table became a most interesting article of diet when it was regarded as a country either buried under snow, or being gradually flooded, according to whether it was eaten with sugar or with milk. Something different for breakfast might have been a change, to be sure, but who could stop to think of that when the inhabitants of the Porridge Country were traveling about on stilts or putting forth on rafts, in a last desperate effort to escape the destruction that was overwhelming their land? Calves'-foot jelly, on the other hand, might be as savory as it pleased; what did the flavor matter? To the small boys who knew their "Arabian Nights" the transparent mass was a golden rock within whose shining hollows might be found the wealth of the Forty Thieves with unlucky Cassim or lucky Ali Baba rejoicing in the treasure-trove. And though they had to take their daily walks quietly enough in the prim gardens

of Heriot Row, near the house which was now the Stevenson home, they knew how to find an escape into a region of thrilling adventures in the two imaginary kingdoms, the islands of Nosingtoniana or Nosingdale, and Encyclopædia, which they had invented and of which they wore the crown. They knew the geography of their sea-surrounded realms; drew maps and pictures of them; carried out invasions and repelled attacks upon their shores; hunted strange beasts from Noah's Ark across their plains, and altogether lived hours and days of keen delight within the boundaries of their islands. Louis found something of the same happiness in later life, when, "a long, lean man on the other side of the world," as he once called himself, he chose an island in the Pacific Ocean to be his home until the end of his life.

Another delight that Louis shared with Bob during this year of comradeship was the management of a toy theater, that amusement which the children of two generations ago seem to have found so fascinating, but which the boys and girls of to-day have apparently forgotten. What joys lay hidden in the paper sheets of scenery and figures we can learn from the charming essay by "R. L. S." that has for its title, "A Penny Plain and Twopence

Colored," the price of one of the theaters and its playbook complete. The cheaper sheets that had to be colored at home by their purchasers were by far the more desirable investment, for the soul of the joy lay in the process of coloring. After the revels with the gay-hued paints and pleasantly spattering brushes, the mere production of the play was something of a disenchantment.

The dingy stationer's shop at the corner of Leith Walk where these treasures were displayed in the window was "a loadstone rock for all that bore the name of boy." To enter, to gaze at the alluring sets, and better still, to turn over the pages of the accompanying plays, was to snatch a glimpse of Paradise. These glimpses were, probably as a not unnecessary measure of protection, forbidden to the lads by the shopkeeper unless they came money in hand. On one unforgettable occasion, Louis was forced to yield the booklets over which he had been lingering too long to the impatient owner, who swept them away with the remark: "I do not believe, child, that you are an intending purchaser at all."

The difficulty of choosing was indeed not the least of the delight. The mere names of the plays had a world of adventure in their very sound. "The Red

Rover," "The Wood Demon," "The Miller and His Men," "Three-Fingered Jack," "The Terror of Jamaica,"—all these and many more Louis owned and produced. "In this roll-call of stirring names you read the evidences of a happy childhood," he says. As for the scenery, its forests and roadsides, castles and cottages, were the little Scotchman's first glimpse of England, and so his first real visit to England was, he says, "only coming home to Skelt," as the artist of the paper stage was called. When in later years he sought to become a playwright himself, his vivid memory of Skelt's melodrama may well have led him to choose pirates and robbers for his chief personages. "Deacon Brodie, or the Double Life," and "Admiral Guinea" are what he would have called "Skeltery," and though they brought him few laurels, it was, we may be sure, with some of his boyish delight of the "Penny Plain and Twopence Colored" of the old shop in the Leith Walk that he set his own stage villains traveling on their romantic road.

If there had been only the gray, wind-swept streets of Edinburgh, or the meager square of greenness that was called Heriot Row Gardens, for the delicate boy to stir abroad in, he would very probably have found no escape from invalidism. But

luckily for him and for us, there was a happy refuge only four miles away. Among the Pentland Hills, that never ceased through all his wanderings to be "the hills of home" to him, was the manse or parsonage of Colinton, where his mother had been born, and where his clergyman grandfather still lived. Here in a valley, with the Leith River flowing companionably past it, was a wood-surrounded garden, holding in its center a sloping lawn, "literally steeped in sunshine." In this friendly spot the little weakling could learn to live in the open air and win the freedom forbidden him by the bleak town. It was a place where he could be rapturously at home with outdoor sights and sounds, watch hopefully for the wild animals of his travelers' tales to emerge from the garden shrubbery of lilac and laurel, rejoice in the mysteries of swamps and their strange growths, or be thrilled by the "spunkies," or marsh-lights, appearing and disappearing among the tombstones in the graveyard beyond.

Though he must sometimes have been ill at Colinton, no pictures of illness form part of his memories of life there. When in later life he wrote the lines in which he wishes each reader of his poetry to have

“ A house with lawns enclosing it,  
A living river by the door,”

he was wishing his friends the same good fortune in surroundings that he had enjoyed at Colinton, and that made him remember his days there as his “ golden age.”

Indoors, the manse sheltered almost as many marvels as the acres round about it could boast, though eager children might gaze at them only as it pleased their elders to grant them permission. From the distant Eastern countries where many of the thirteen sons and daughters of Dr. Balfour had made their homes, all sort of curiosities—shells, bangles, and idols—were sent as gifts to decorate the manse, and to delight the boys and girls who were always numerous there. The children of the Eastern wanderers were sent home to be cared for in the healthier climate of Scotland, and they were Louis's playmates, as their parents' gifts were his delight. One of the most beautiful poems in the “ Child's Garden ” is addressed to the cousin who often shared the manse nursery with him. He reminds her of all the wonders of the Indian cabinet they both loved to peer at, and how

“ The level of the parlor floor  
Was honest, homely Scottish shore ;  
But when we climbed upon a chair  
Behold the gorgeous East was there ! ”

Indeed, without the Colinton Manse experiences, out-of-doors and in, the “ Child’s Garden of Verses ” would never have been written.

There was little danger of Louis’s being spoiled by overindulgence during his visits to the manse. His grandfather Balfour, the “ herd of men,” as he calls him, using the quaint old Scotch term for clergyman, was stern and awe-inspiring, and kept the swarm of little folk that were always at Colinton in wholesome fear of his displeasure. He would measure each forbidden footprint detected within the borders of his beloved flower-beds, and hold to strict account the owner of whatever shoe the print was found to fit. However, as soon as the children discovered his methods of tracing the culprit, they learned to confuse the trail by making the footprints larger, so that not many penalties were paid for garden transgressions. Unprofitable and frivolous reading, too, was frowned upon by the grave old gentleman. Louis “ grew blind with terror,” he tells us, when upon his first dip into the enchanted



pages of "The Arabian Nights," his grandfather came unexpectedly into the room and looked over his shoulder just as he was following the fortunes of the Hunchback. But on that occasion the Reverend Mr. Balfour remembered the days of his own



COLINTON MANSE

delight in the bazaars of Bagdad, and for once expressed envy instead of wrath.

The best-loved dweller in the manse was Louis's aunt, the Miss Balfour of whom he asks the questions in the "Child's Garden":

"What did other children do,—  
And what were childhood, wanting you?"

—surely the most loving tribute ever received by any aunt. A lady of great spirit and energy, and of a warm maternal heart as well, she made the manse a true home to the little nephews and nieces that came from the other side of the world to be brought up in their parents' native land. Louis always remembered how well she could tell a story. Once, when he had asked her what an albatross was, she told him the story of the shooting of the great bird by the Ancient Mariner in such a vividly dramatic fashion that the poem itself, when he came to read it long afterwards, seemed far less wonderful than her rendering of it.

Pleasure in reading came to Louis later than to most clever children. What with his mother and Cummy, who read to him not only during his days of sickness but often during his sleepless nights, he was slow to realize that reading was something to be done for one's self. Indeed, books were hardly necessary at all to a little story-lover who had for his nurse Cummy, with her gift of telling tales of all sorts so spiritedly and tirelessly. Fairy stories, fables, border legends of freebooting and smuggling, historical anecdotes of the old Covenanting days, it mattered not what, all were welcome to the insatiable little listener. And Cummy's art as a

story-teller was truly marvelous. "You nearly made me a play-actor," he once declared to her in his grown-up days. "Me!" she responded in consternation, for playgoing was not an amusement that the strictly-reared Scotchwoman permitted herself. "Aye, woman," he persisted, "by the grand dramatic way you had of reciting the hymns." It was small wonder, therefore, that he made no haste to turn to the printed page. But at eight years old, he tells us, taking a book of fairy tales in his hand while going on an errand through the woods, he found himself reading as he strolled, and the gates of story-book land flew open for him. From that time on there was one more source of happiness for the boy who had to find all his happiness in quiet doings. Before long he had read "Robinson Crusoe," Mayne Reid's stories, old volumes of "Punch," "The Arabian Nights," and had made the acquaintance of the king of all Scottish story-tellers, Walter Scott, whose example he was to follow in making his native town dear to all book-lovers. And though he soon found his way to books other than romances, such as essays, histories, and even sermons, he always believed that the stories read and enjoyed so keenly in his boyhood were the books that had helped him most.

The dignity of being an author had been attained by Louis long before his days of delight in books. His authorship was, however, like that of many another clever little boy, only a matter of the family circle. When he was in his sixth year, an uncle offered a prize for the best History of Moses written by any one of his children or nephews. The six-year-old, who had heard the story of Moses over and over again in Cummy's Bible readings, was anxious to compete and dictated to his mother a history which she set down, with great pride one can be sure, in a little copy-book. The appreciative uncle gave the little historian a Bible picture-book as an extra prize, and made him eager to become a real author.

Almost from that time on, writing histories or tales, or rather, composing them, for at first he was readier to dictate than to write, became a part of his life. He worked hard at learning to be a writer, and in his manhood, when he had won fame for the clear beauty of his style as well as for his gifts as a teller of tales, he seemed to take more pride in his industry than in any other of the qualities which had given him his place as the first English writer of his day. "I kept always two books in my pocket, one to read, one to write in," he tells us, in a famous

essay on his college days called "A College Magazine." Then he goes on to tell, in words which have been quoted over and over again for the benefit of other young people who are eager to write, how he kept his mind always busy with the task of fitting what he saw with appropriate words, and how he worked incessantly at copying closely the style of whatever author was his favorite for the time being. It was, he declared, through imitating the essayists Hazlitt and Lamb, as well as the seventeenth-century Sir Thomas Browne, the novelists Defoe and Hawthorne, the poet Wordsworth, and even French writers of both poetry and prose, that he came to be master of the literary style which all the world admires. "That, like it or not, is the way to learn to write," he says.

It was his way, one must admit. Indeed, what writer would not have had faith in efforts so unwearying as his? Here is an extract from a letter written in one of the last years of his life: "I have written in bed, and written out of it, . . . written in sickness, written torn by coughing, written when my head swam for weakness; and for so long, it seems to me I have won my wager and recovered my glove." His was a noble victory, to be sure. But no victory won by the power of industry alone

could have given him his place in men's hearts if added to it there had not been the magic power of genius.

No other countryside has so many stories to tell as the region around Edinburgh, and in the more serious of Louis's early literary efforts he tried, wisely enough, to write of the romance and the history belonging to the town and the country that he knew. The old Covenanters, those grim heroes who fought and slew and suffered for their independence of faith, were the chief figures in these early romances, and he became, as he put it, "a good friend to the paper-makers," while writing Covenanting stories, which, like other schoolboys' stories, never reached completion. Nevertheless, one of these productions, called "The Pentland Rising," which dealt with an event that had occurred in the village of Colinton, helped Louis to his first dignity of print. Mr. Stevenson, pleased with his son's choice of a subject and his knowledge of history, but not approving of the story that the youthful romancer had invented, asked for a rewritten version in which the story was to be left out. Louis, who was less used to receiving praise from his father than from his mother and Cummy, took great pains with the rewriting; and Mr. Stevenson

was so well pleased with the lad's efforts that he had "The Pentland Rising; a Page of History—1666," printed by an Edinburgh stationer. Not many people, however, had the opportunity of reading the little green pamphlet which was R. L. S.'s first published work, for soon after its publication Mr. Stevenson himself bought up all the copies.

A little later than the time of the appearance of "The Pentland Rising" a fair was held in the Stevenson home, for the benefit of a foreign mission in which Mrs. Stevenson was interested. Louis's contribution to his mother's table was a humorous dialogue called "The Charity Bazaar," which was printed as a booklet and sold for sixpence a copy. Thirty years afterwards, one of the little sixpenny pamphlets was sold to an admirer of R. L. S. for twenty-five pounds—just one thousand times the amount that had been its price when the boyish author wrote it.

But "The Pentland Rising," "The Charity Bazaar," and the dozen or so of romances that never got beyond the drawers of their author's desk, were all attempts to write in a more or less grown-up fashion. Whenever Louis wished to write for the sheer fun of it, a short-lived magazine was likely to make its appearance either in his school or

in his home. Of some of these productions Louis was not only the editor but the entire contributing staff, and the charge of a penny he sometimes made for granting reading privileges was small indeed compared to the labor that must have been expended in writing out the pages. A few copies of two of these periodicals are still in existence, and were shown to Stevenson lovers in New York not long ago, after having traveled from Edinburgh to Samoa, and thence to San Francisco, always faithfully guarded by their owners as rare treasures. A poem written below a lurid illustration on the front page of *The Schoolboy's Magazine* told how the hero lay dying while

“ Demons were waiting  
To carry him home.”

In another paper, called *The Sunbeam Magazine*—“An Illustrated Miscellany of Fact, Fiction, and Fun, edited by R. L. Stevenson,” there were fewer thrills and stories of a more grown-up, and it must be admitted, of a duller kind. But *The Sunbeam Magazine* belonged to his later school-days, and the editor was probably by that time too conscious of his dignity as a sixteen-year-old student to indulge in a thoroughly hearty revel of horrors.



Going to school was, as might have been expected, a decidedly irregular affair for the delicate boy. Like most only children, he was eager for the society of schoolfellows, and longed for the time to come when he could share in the privileges of companionship denied him in his solitary nursery. But he was not strong enough to go to "the school," as Edinburgh children say, until he was past eight. Even then he was far from ready for the rough-and-tumble sports of the other laddies, and there were many days and weeks when he was glad to forfeit his dignity of being a schoolboy and stay quietly at home with his mother and Cummy, listening while they read to him from his beloved story-books. Mr. Stevenson, ambitious though he was that his son should become a successful and useful man, concerned himself very little at this time with Louis's doings at school, so that there was no displeasure to be feared if progress in the multiplication table and other mysteries not to be found in Mayne Reid's stories or in "The Arabian Nights" was frequently interrupted. Whether he learned little or much, however, his teachers regarded him with affection. One of them, who taught him at his first school, wrote of his famous pupil many years afterwards as "the most delightful boy he ever

knew; ready for his lessons, ready for a story, ready for fun." Of his readiness for stories and fun there can at any rate be no doubt, for his mother once remarked about all his tutors: "I think they liked talking to him better than teaching him."

Louis never had a chance of being either "dux" or "booby" at the Edinburgh High School where so many famous Scotchmen learned their first Greek and Latin. Though his father and his uncles had all been "High School callants," as the pupils of the famous school that now overlooks the city from the Calton Hill are called, when the time came for him to leave his first school for a larger one the High School was not chosen. Instead, he was sent to the Edinburgh Academy, which was rapidly becoming known on account of the excellence of its master. Among his fellow-pupils there, though not among his friends at that time, were Andrew Lang, to whom young people owe the well-beloved "Fairy Books," and Sir Walter Simpson, R. L. S.'s fellow-traveler on the famous "Inland Voyage," and the owner of the canoe "Cigarette." But here, too, although he enjoyed the Academy boys' privilege of carrying a "clackan," or wooden racket, to and from school, he was unable to share in the school

sports, and had to wait until later to find friends among his schoolmates.

He never got beyond the stage of being a "gyte," or junior boy, at the Academy, for at twelve he was sent to a boarding-school near London, while his father and mother spent the winter in the south of France. He was desperately homesick, and in a funny little letter, half French and half English, in which he complains that "tous les garçons kik up comme grand un bruit qu'il est possible," begged his parents to let him join them. They did not refuse his quaintly-worded appeal, and he was set free from boarding-school to begin the journeyings abroad which were to form so important a part of his life. He never forgot any of the wonders of this early glimpse of travel. In one of his most beautiful stories, "Will o' the Mill," he gives his hero a home in the midst of the mountainous scenery of the Brenner Pass, which he had crossed while on his first journey many years before.

Louis's last three years before entering the University were spent at a school where the masters gave no lessons to be studied at home. These were pleasant days for the future writer, who was no fonder of his school-books than most other boys. He could practise his beloved art of writing to his

heart's content, and in company with another lad, his first friend among his schoolmates, in later life a learned professor at a Vienna university, filled his desk with innumerable stories and sketches and plays. One of these plays had for its plot the story of Deacon Brodie, the strange criminal who deceived all Edinburgh by leading the life of a worthy citizen by day and a housebreaker by night. Years later, when Louis set to work as a recognized author, to write a play to be produced on the stage, the Deacon Brodie of his early dramatic efforts again became his hero.

At seventeen came the University. Edinburgh University, the block of gray buildings within hardly more than a stone's throw of busy Prince's Street, is very different from the college at Oxford or Cambridge at which Louis would have found himself had he been an English youth instead of a Scotch lad. The English colleges, set in their lovely gardens, and shut away from the turmoil and trouble of streets, belong to a world all their own, and the young men who dwell in their quiet beauty lead a guarded and sheltered life. Moreover, the college world in England has until lately belonged to what we call the upper classes,—the families able to give their sons the special training of the great

public schools or of skillful tutors. Most English students, therefore, find their way to college along the same road, and when they reach their goal are prepared to regulate their manners as well as their studies after the fashion of their neighbors.

A Scottish university, however—there are four of them, of which Edinburgh was the last to be established—gathers together rich and poor, gentle and simple, within its walls. For in Scotland, where every child has for centuries had the right to a respectable share of book-learning, scores upon scores of parents in humble peasant homes look forward to seeing their lad “wag his pow in a pulpit”; and all sorts of sacrifices are made by young and old in order that clever Jock or studious Sandy may have his chance at “the colleging.” So it happens that when the son of parents possessing both wealth and culture takes his place in the college classroom he finds many of his fellow-students belonging to a rougher world than that which he knows. As Louis put it in one of his essays telling of his college days: “The raffish young gentleman in gloves must measure his scholarship with the plain clownish laddie from the parish school.” And far more often than not, the poorer lad proves the better scholar.

This lesson in democracy, or rather in understanding and appreciating the merits of many different classes of people, was probably the most useful part of Louis's college education. Differing from the English universities in this respect as well, a Scottish university allows its students great freedom in the matter of attending lectures, and of this freedom Louis availed himself to the utmost. His studies, chosen at his father's desire to fit him for the family profession of engineer, made little impression on him. When the Professor of Natural Philosophy called the spinning of a top "a case of Kinetic Stability," he was interested in the long name applied to the simple proceeding; but as a rule, he preferred the knowledge gained during the putting into practice of what he described as an "extensive and highly rational system of truancy" to the facts taught in any of the college lectures.

The practical part of his preparation for what his father believed would be his lifework was somewhat more attractive to him, since it set him to wandering about the seashore, and brought him the delight of sailing adventurously about rocky island coasts. But these pleasures were apt to be marred when his father, who loved nothing better

than to solve imaginary problems in engineering, would ask questions about the undercutting of river banks, or the blasting of bowlders. To Louis all this was, as he said, "like school in holidays"; and only served to convince him that the Stevenson line of engineers was not to be continued in the son of Thomas Stevenson.

Of the friends that college brought him, one of the best-loved was, curiously enough, a professor of one of the subjects he disliked most. He had stayed away from the troublesome lectures, but nevertheless wished to procure a certificate of attendance. It was during the interview in which the absentee scholar begged for the certificate, explaining, with true truant's logic, that granting it was merely a matter of form, that the foundations of the friendship were laid. Louis succeeded in obtaining his certificate, for which the professor found "a form of words" that could be used with a fair degree of honesty. But the more lasting success was with the professor, who accomplished the feat of making his light-minded student heartily ashamed of himself. The two remained friends until the death of the professor in 1885, when Louis, then famous, became his biographer and wrote the "Memoir of Fleeming

Jenkin," which is not the least interesting of his works.

Friends of his own age, or near it, were later in coming to him than to most lads, but were none the less valued for that. Just as in his petticoated days the only child had been almost pathetically eager for the companionship of other little folk, so in his solitary boyhood he yearned for friendship, and welcomed it with a full heart when it reached him. "I thought I minded for nothing when I had found my Faithful," he wrote in his own account of his early days.

It was at a college literary society, the famous Edinburgh Speculative Society, known as "The Spec," to which Scott had belonged three-quarters of a century earlier, that he found his best opportunities of meeting young men with tastes like his own. Here he read essays, discussed literature, debated rather unsuccessfully, and finally became one of the five presidents of the society. But the chief advantage of the "Spec" was that he could keep gayly on with his chosen work of learning to write, counting on his friends for the frank criticism which is usually a far greater help to a young author than unlimited admiration without any fault-finding. They told him readily enough what they



thought of his attempts when he showed them. One called a piece of work, "Padding!"; another said of a poem, "I cannot understand why you do lyrics so badly." Louis's comment upon this last criticism was "No more could I." But he kept cheerfully on with his writing, and finally a yellow-covered publication, *The Edinburgh University Magazine*, made its appearance, with four members of the "Spec" as its editors, Louis the youngest but most active of them. The magazine, indeed, could boast as many editors as numbers, for its fourth issue was its last. In his account of it Louis says: "The first number was edited by all four of us, with prodigious bustle; the second fell principally into the hands of Ferrier and me; the third I edited alone; and it has long been a solemn question who it was that edited the fourth." When the short life of the magazine was over, Louis went on undismayed with his scribbling in penny copy-books carried in his pocket, having, as he says, "fallen back in one day from the printed author to the manuscript student."

Not until more than two years after the days of *The Edinburgh University Magazine* did anything else by Louis find its way into print. Then, in his twenty-third year, one of his delightfully-written

papers about the wanderings which he loved raised him to the rank of paid contributor to a famous London weekly. But between the time of the death of the "poor harmless paper," as its youngest editor called the *University Magazine*, and the publication of the essay on "Roads" in *The Saturday Review* a great change had come about in Louis's prospects. He had, as the saying goes, taken his courage in both hands, and had told his father that he cared nothing for engineering and everything for literature. Mr. Stevenson, evidently not without his suspicions that the excursions to lighthouses and harbors in which he had placed more confidence than in the college lectures were not producing practical results, had in the course of a "dreadful evening walk" asked his son questions which brought out the truth. The walk must have been an ordeal to the questioner as well as the questioned one, for the thing that Mr. Stevenson had wished above all was that the son might carry on the honorable and useful work which the father and the grandfather had begun. Indeed, only a few days before this confession of dislike for engineering, Louis had raised his hopes by reading before a learned society an excellent paper on "Intermittent Lights" which might very well have led the listeners to believe that

its author was well on the way to becoming a successful engineer. Nevertheless, disappointed as the father was, he did his best to guide his son wisely along the uncertain path he had chosen. Literature, which to Louis meant so much, seemed to him but a poor sort of work of which to make the chief occupation of one's life, and in consequence he insisted that another profession should be substituted for engineering. Remembering how Scott had benefited by his legal training, he required from Louis a promise that he would study law, so that if nothing came of his ambition to make his way in literature, he would at least be safeguarded against profitless idleness. Only too happy to have accomplished so much towards gaining his purpose, Louis agreed to attend the law classes at the University, and four years afterwards the name of Robert Louis Stevenson was added to the list of members of the Scottish bar.

But by the time the right to call himself an advocate was granted to him, he had earned another which he valued above everything else in the world—the right to call himself an author. During the years of his slow and often interrupted legal studies, he had found his footing and made friends who belonged to the world of literature and who recog-

nized his genius. Success in the sense of wide popularity was not yet his, it is true. The writer who cares greatly, not only about what he says, but about his manner of saying it, is not apt to become suddenly popular, and Louis was no exception to the rule. But he had accomplished his self-appointed task of mastering the art of writing, and that was his true success.

The story of Robert Louis Stevenson's achievements in literature is the story of a hardly-won triumph, gained in spite of the ill-health and weakness which placed him, at a disadvantage in his manhood as in his childhood. Yet because he held to his courageous purpose in the face of all disheartening odds, he made his final victory one in which his readers the world over share. In later life he sometimes wished that he, too, like his father and grandfather, might have saved men's lives by building lighthouses. But he had no need to envy any man's work, however noble. His own brave endeavor and undaunted spirit are beacons as bright and as lasting as those that shine today in the towers that first gave the name of Stevenson its claim to honor; for, as a Canadian poet says, in some beautiful verses written as a memorial to "R. L. S.,"

“ His fathers lit the dangerous coast  
To steer the daring merchant home ;  
His courage lights the darkling port  
Where every sea-worn sail must come.” \*

\*From “ A Seamark,” by Bliss Carman.

## WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY

IN Shakespeare's "Richard II," old John of Gaunt, the young King's uncle, endeavoring to settle a quarrel which in the end cost the King both life and crown, speaks the line, "To be a makepeace shall become my age." We do not find the curious word "makepeace" anywhere else in English literature. A certain Yorkshire family, however, called Thackwra or Thackeray, and living in their home county in the north of England, sometimes gave the name Makepeace to their sons, and more than a hundred and fifty years after John of Gaunt's speech was written a young lad of this family, named William Makepeace Thackeray, went out to India to enter the service of the powerful East India Company which then ruled that country. There, by dint of courage and good sense, he made an honorable name and a comfortable fortune for himself. And so it happened that his sons followed in his footsteps, and that a grandson, the William Makepeace Thackeray who lived to make the name so famous, first saw the light in the far-distant city of Calcutta.

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A picture painted in India a century ago, and familiar to all readers who know the beautiful volumes of Thackeray's works edited by his daughter, has a special charm for the lovers of Thackeray. It shows a pretty family group. A tall, soldierly-looking gentleman is seated in a great carved chair, and at his side stands his beautiful wife, holding close to her the little three-year-old boy, William Makepeace Thackeray. The little boy looks out at the world with quiet steadiness and a clear simplicity of gaze. It is a look that the great writer never lost, his daughter tells us, in spite of all the trials that life brought him,—and they were not a few.

“Pray Heaven that early love and truth  
May never wholly pass away,”

he once wrote in a poem about schoolboys; and his prayer did not remain unanswered.

English people who have lived in India call the strange, distant country that they rule “the land of regrets.” Times have changed, indeed, since “Sylhet” Thackeray, as the novelist's grandfather was called from the name of the district to which he was assigned as inspector, traveled six months to reach his new home. The voyage can now be



**William Makepeace Thackeray**  
From the portrait by Samuel Laurence





made in a month or less; the task of governing is less difficult; the tropical diseases less deadly. But for English mothers in India there is still the regret of parting with their children. Even though born in the East, the children of English parents do not thrive there after babyhood, and the great steamers of to-day, like the smaller boats of a century earlier, carry to England each year scores of little passengers who leave sad mothers' hearts behind them.

In 1817, one of these little passengers was William Makepeace Thackeray, a boy of six, whose father, the revenue collector of the district of Calcutta, had died two years before. A little cousin, Richmond Shakespear, his friend and playmate from babyhood, was his traveling companion. In one of the "Roundabout Papers," written forty years later, Thackeray tells how he remembers in long distant days, "a ghaut or river-stair at Calcutta, and a day when down those steps to a boat which was waiting came two children whose mothers remained on shore."

An incident of this voyage was a moment's glimpse of the great Napoleon, then a defeated exile at St. Helena. "Our ship touched on an island on the way home," says Thackeray, in his famous lecture on George III, "where my black servant took

me a long walk over rocks and hills until we reached a garden where we saw a man walking. 'That is he,' said the black man. 'That is Bonaparte. He eats three sheep every day and all the children he can lay his hands on!'" The little traveler must have been glad when his ship sailed away with him and left St. Helena and its captive Corsican ogre, as many an Englishman called the ex-Emperor, behind. But it is probable that this bit of contact with Napoleon was the beginning of his interest in Waterloo, the battle which changed the lives of all the chief characters in his novel of "Vanity Fair," as well as the map of Europe; and which no historian has ever made quite so real as Thackeray. Indeed, there could have been few readers of "Vanity Fair" dwelling in any of the great European cities during the early days of the August of 1914 to whom the anxiety of that fateful time did not recall the famous chapter in "Vanity Fair" which tells how breathlessly the English in Brussels awaited the news of the historic conflict.

In the pages of Thackeray's books, as in those of most other novelists, there are faithful pictures of the writer's own childhood. "The Newcomes," perhaps, tells us most about its author's very early days. Clive Newcome, the hero, makes the long

homeward journey across the sea from India at just the age when Thackeray himself traveled to England, and the letter written by little Clive in the novel, beginning with "Dearest Papa i am very well i hope you are very well," is not unlike one of the first letters that Billy-boy, as Thackeray used to be called, wrote to his mother, then so far away. Billy-boy's letter ends with a message of love to Captain Smyth, who is asked to bring the writer's mother "back to her affectionate son." Captain Smyth, a brave and honorable gentleman, was about to be married to Thackeray's mother, who had been widowed so early, and the marriage resulted in much happiness for the young widow and for her little son as well.

But before the six-year-old boy who wrote so affectionately to his mother was to see her again he had an experience which brought him much unhappiness. His school-days began at a school near Southampton, where he was very wretched indeed. He wrote of it, years and years afterwards, as "a school of which our deluded parents had heard favorable reports, but which was governed by a horrible little tyrant who made our lives so miserable that I remember kneeling by the side of my little bed of a night and saying, 'Pray God, I may

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dream of my mother.' ” We know from Dickens's description of Dotheboys Hall in “Nicholas Nickleby” how the children of poor or careless parents were often neglected in the early part of the last century. But even boys whose parents were loving and careful sometimes suffered greatly from the harsh treatment which was then believed to be a necessary part of education. Thackeray, who hated cruelty with all the strength of his tender heart, never forgave the master of his first school for his unkindness to helpless children.

But the joy of his mother's home-coming soon after must have gone far to make him forget his early trials, hard to bear as they were. “He could not speak,” his mother wrote to a friend in India, “but kissed me, and looked at me again and again.” Children are usually most voluble when happiest. In the little lad whose happiness made him silent we can see something of that power of restraint amid deep feeling that gives the nobler characters in his books their strength and dignity.

At his next school, which was in Chiswick, near London, although there was no tyrant to be endured, he was still far from happy. Once, indeed, he attempted to run away, but frightened at the great world that stretched before him at the turn-

ing of the road, ran back and never confessed his adventure until years afterwards. In "Vanity Fair" there is a school at Chiswick, and in the opening chapter one of the heroines, the clever but unscrupulous Becky Sharp, throws a "Johnson's Dictionary," the parting gift of the school, at the great iron gates of the establishment as they close behind her forever. Perhaps we may assume that the little incident of the unamiable Becky's escapade with the dictionary was Thackeray's harmless revenge for his own troubles at Chiswick School.

By the time he was ten years of age Thackeray had already become what he never ceased to be—a great novel-reader. He always remembered lying in a garden and reading his first novel,—it was "The Scottish Chiefs,"—on the very day when George IV was crowned. He found the book very sad, and never finished it "for crying," as he afterwards confessed. A little later he came to know Scott, and all the wonders of the Waverley Novels. Of this time of fascination by the great Wizard of the North, he writes: "Do I forget one night after prayers (when we under-boys were sent to bed), lingering at my cupboard to read one little page of my beloved Walter Scott,—and down came the

monitor's book upon my head." "Ivanhoe" was his chief favorite. He was always eager to redress the wrongs of the beautiful dark-eyed Rebecca, and did so years afterwards when he wrote "Rebecca and Rowena," his amusing sequel to "Ivanhoe," in which the tables are turned, and Rebecca, after an amazing number of distressing adventures, is married to her champion. The "Leather Stocking Tales" of the American novelist, Cooper, the schoolboy reader found almost as good as his other favorites; and he thoroughly enjoyed thrillingly horrid tales like "Manfroni, or the One-handed Monk," though, as he confessed later, they frightened him so badly as he pored over them that he hardly dared to look around.

Not content with merely reading of his heroes and heroines, he would draw them as they appeared to his eager imagination. He had always been fond of drawing, and like his hero, Clive Newcome, had illustrated even his baby letters to India with funny little pictures. Later, all his books and papers were covered with sketches suggested by the endless romances that he loved to read. The Charterhouse, his third school, still treasures many of his schoolboy drawings, but he must have made hundreds of others. His schoolfellows were always eager for

illustrations of their favorite books, and delighted in seeing them grow under his pencil. "I say, old boy, draw us Vivaldi tortured in the Inquisition or Don Quixote and the windmills, you know," they would say. The pictures showing Vivaldi's uncomfortable experiences are carefully preserved in the British Museum to-day.

Nearly all of this reading and drawing belonged to the years that Thackeray spent at the famous Charterhouse in London, the school that is called Grey Friars in his novels. Most of his boy heroes go there, too,—Clive Newcome, Arthur Pendennis, little Rawdon Crawley, Philip Firmin. There are no schoolboys in Charterhouse Square to-day, for forty years ago the great school was removed to the town of Godalming, in the pleasant Surrey country not far from London. But the ancient buildings, once the home of the Carthusian brotherhood of monks, have not passed wholly from their former use. To-day, as in Thackeray's time, they offer the shelter of a home to some threescore aged gentlemen called the Brethren of the Charterhouse, who have lived worthy and honorable lives, and yet found themselves lonely towards the close.

Charterhouse Square is a quiet old-world corner of busy London, where gray walls with gray towers



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rising behind them inclose broad stretches of lawn, green as only English lawns can be. Clouds of snowy pigeons hover everywhere about, and the Brethren, pacing up and down in the sunshine, watch their short flights with quiet interest. Now



THE CHARTERHOUSE

and then one of the old gentlemen is seen proudly escorting a visitor to all the quaint and historic corners of the place, not forgetting the chapel and the memorial tablet to Thackeray just outside its door. Within that chapel, in Thackeray's school-days, the Charterhouse boys and the old gentlemen, whom they used to call Codds, without ever know-

ing any reason for the name, assembled for daily worship. There must have been many other encounters between the staid, slow-moving old gentlemen and the eager lads hurrying from school to games along the low-arched passages that join the courts. And it is to Thackeray's memories of those friendly aged neighbors of his school-days that we owe one of the most beautiful characters in his books, and a scene that few people, old or young, can read dry-eyed. Colonel Newcome, the father of Clive, in "The Newcomes," and as we know, a portrait of Thackeray's own stepfather, Major Carmichael-Smyth, loses his fortune and goes back in his old age to be a poor pensioner at the Charterhouse, where he once went to school, a merry, careless boy. We can hardly wonder that Thackeray's own pen faltered when he wrote the scene in which the noble old man, hearing the chapel bell, and thinking himself a boy again, raises himself in bed and dies with "Adsum," the old school answer to roll-call, on his lips.

Although when he grew up Thackeray came to have an affection for "Grey Friars" and took huge delight when he visited the school in tipping the boys with crown pieces and half sovereigns, in the good old English fashion, he was not happy there

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in his own school-days. London bells ring all sorts of nonsense rhymes, they say. Everyone has heard:

“ You owe me five farthings,  
Say the bells of St. Martin’s;  
When will you pay me?  
Say the bells of old Bailey.”

The Charterhouse school bell might well have seemed to a reluctant eleven-year-old scholar to be ringing a rhyme of its own,

“ Latin and Greek  
All through the week,”—

for neither then nor for many a long year after did English boys in schools like the Charterhouse have any other studies for the eight or ten years that many of them spent there. Thackeray’s Charterhouse career did not begin in very cheerful fashion. “ Here,” said Dr. Russell, the headmaster, “ take this boy to the housekeeper and tell her that he knows nothing and will just do for the lowest forms.” Small wonder that the unfortunate pupil was rather hopeless at times. Even in his last year at school, when he had attained the age of seventeen and the dignity of a monitor, he wrote: “ There

are 370 boys in the school. I wish there were only 369."

In the novel of "Pendennis," the headmaster of Grey Friars makes a speech to the hero, a boy of sixteen, who has stumbled in reciting his Greek lesson. If, as seems quite likely, it is a sample of what Thackeray often had to endure, we can sympathize with his longing to leave school. "Pendennis, sir," said the master, "your idleness is incorrigible and your stupidity beyond example. You are a disgrace to your school and to your family, and I have no doubt will prove so in after-life to your country. . . . Miserable trifle! . . . A boy, sir, who does not learn his Greek play cheats the parent who spends money for his education. A boy who cheats his parents is not far from robbing or forging upon his neighbors. A man who forges upon his neighbor pays the penalty of his crime upon the gallows. . . . Go on, sir, and I warn you that the very next mistake shall subject you to the punishment of the rod."

By the time he came to write "Pendennis," Thackeray was able to smile at the hardships that once seemed to him so great, and to realize that his youthful good resolutions had often amounted to very little. "I have made a vow," he writes, in

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one of his early letters to his home people, "not to spend the five shillings you gave me until I get into the eighth form, which I mean to ask for to-morrow." We do not know the fate of the five-shilling piece, but the boy who sat next to Thackeray in school, and who grew up to be the great classical scholar, Dr. Liddell, remembered long afterwards that they both used to spend most of their time in drawing. Perhaps, after all, the fault was not wholly with the stern headmaster.

The Charterhouse remains to-day the place in London most closely associated with Thackeray. When in 1911, just one hundred years after his birth, a memorial exhibition was held in his honor, the Charterhouse was chosen for its site.

A faithful likeness of Thackeray in his boyhood exists in the shape of a bust made by a French artist named Devile. It represents a curly-haired lad, with handsome features and the broad, low brow that gave his head its unusual size. When he first came to England from India, his aunt discovered with great alarm that his uncle's hat exactly fitted him, and hurried to consult a physician. "Don't be afraid," said the doctor, "he has a large head, but there is a great deal in it."

Only a year or two after the bust was made, one

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of the handsome features was spoiled. In a fight with a schoolfellow named George Venables, the



**THACKERAY AT THE AGE OF TWELVE**  
(Bust in the National Portrait Gallery, London)

bridge of Thackeray's nose was broken, and the disfigurement lasted throughout his life. Forty years of friendship, nevertheless, followed upon the

accident. Much of Thackeray's early humorous work was written under the pen-name of "Michael Angelo Titmarsh," and it is supposed that his choice of Michael Angelo as part of his signature was a jocular allusion to the fact that the great artist, too, had suffered from the misfortune of a broken nose.

His opponent Venables' description of him as a "pretty gentle boy at the Charterhouse, who was liked by those who knew him," is one of the records of his schoolboy days. Another schoolfellow who knew him when he was about thirteen describes him as a rosy-faced boy with dark, curling hair, and a quick, intelligent eye, ever twinkling with wit and humor." He was at that time not tall for his age, we learn. It was only after a severe illness that he became the "Cornish giant" that Carlyle called him, with six feet and three inches of height to his credit, and breadth in proportion.

Thackeray as a schoolboy never cared either for sports or for debating. Music he was very fond of, although he was always too shy to sing a song alone. His handwriting was small but very beautiful. In later life he used to say jokingly that if all else failed, he could earn his living by writing the Lord's Prayer on the tiniest of coins, the three-

penny bit. Unlike the average schoolboy of his day, he was not in the least given to bullying the younger boys, and he was always good-tempered. He was, another of his school friends tells us, very sensitive, and did not like to fail in anything he undertook, but he had no trace of anything like vanity or conceit, and he hated meanness, cruelty, and humbug as a schoolboy just as keenly as he did in after life.

May of 1828 was the long-looked-for month that set him free from the Charterhouse to finish his preparation for the University, with his devoted stepfather, Major Carmichael-Smyth, who was very proud of his stepson's cleverness and used to say that geometry was child's play to him. In the following spring he set out for Cambridge in his stepfather's company, having finished his preparations, as he writes, by ordering "a buckish coat of blue-black with a velvet collar," and gathering together a great heap of friendly letters of introduction. There, like other young English gentlemen of his day, and like his own hero, Arthur Pendennis, he was to work and to play, and more than all, to make friends who were to give his future life much of its meaning.

To us who look back across the century, Cam-



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bridge, in the days when Thackeray found himself a student there, seems almost like an enchanted spot. Its outward enchantments remain the same to-day, it is true. The gray towers still overlook the secluded quadrangles; the peaceful river Cam still



ON THE RIVER CAM, AT CAMBRIDGE

goes "footing slow," as it did when Milton wrote of it, between the velvety "backs," which are the pride of the Cambridge colleges; the exquisite beauty of form and color in King's College Chapel is unchanged. But no such flowering-time of genius was ever before known in any university as the third decade of the nineteenth century

brought to Cambridge. Thackeray's time at Cambridge was that of a halfscore of others who belong to English literature. Among them were Edward Fitzgerald, the poet-translator of the "Rubaiyat," who was to be "dear old Fitz" to Thackeray, and the best loved of all his friends; John Mitchell Kemble, the Anglo-Saxon scholar; Lord Houghton, the poet and man of letters; Arthur Hallam, the friend of Tennyson; and besides two other Tennyson brothers, Alfred Tennyson himself. Not all of these became the new collegian's intimates during his stay at the University, but the foundations of real and lasting friendship were laid at the club meetings, breakfasts, feasts in hall, and other parties that even a century ago counted quite as much in the life of the college as the lectures on classics and mathematics.

As might perhaps have been expected from the boy who drew Dr. Russell's wrath upon himself so frequently, Thackeray's work did not win him any special honors at Cambridge. He was not idle there, but went his own way in his studies rather than along the beaten track which led to prizes. He read a great deal of poetry and history, and talked over his reading with his tutors and his friends—with the latter more than with the former,

no doubt. Before he had been at Cambridge long, his gift for writing clever fun in verse and prose was well known to his companions, and he was a welcome contributor to the college papers in which then as now most of the serious things of college life were laughed at more or less good-naturedly by students with a turn for satire. In one of these papers called "The Snob" he published a parody on the University prize poem for the year, which had been written by Alfred Tennyson. The subject was "Timbuctoo," and the parody, beginning,

"In Africa, a quarter of the world—  
Men's skins are black, their hair is crisped  
and curled!"

does its best to burlesque with mock solemnity the somewhat overserious performance of the prize-winner. It is pleasant to know that exactly thirty years after the writing of the parody of "Timbuctoo" the parodist wrote to the author of the original poem, then the laureate of England, to tell his "dear old Alfred" of the delight and gratitude that reading "The Idylls of the King," then newly published, had brought him. And Tennyson, in reply, wrote to say that his old friend's note gave him more pleasure than "all the journals and

monthlies and quarterlies." Thackeray, boy or man, was never misunderstood by those who knew him as he really was. But his power of satire was so great that it sometimes casts into shadow the other qualities that belong to his writings quite as truly, and thus prevents some readers from realizing that the greatest of modern English satirists was also the gentlest and tenderest of men.

"Pendennis," the second long novel that Thackeray wrote, is full of college memories. Though Arthur Pendennis goes to Oxbridge, which is, needless to say, a university of Thackeray's own invention, the pictures of life there are drawn unmistakably from the university that Thackeray knew. Pendennis, alas! follows his own devices too well, and pays for his freedom by failing in his first examination for his degree—"being plucked," as the undergraduates call it. We know that Arthur Pendennis was meant to have some resemblance to his creator. Thackeray, however, did not share this one of Pendennis's experiences, although, like Tennyson, he left college without taking a degree. A stay of two years at college had given him all that his parents believed was necessary. Travel, rather than college lectures, was the best education for a youth whose brain was as strong and active as

his, and who had already shown that he possessed the power of judging men keenly and wisely. And so, in 1830, he went abroad, making a leisurely journey through the delightful Rhine country which he always loved, as indeed most men do love the scenes of their early travels. "Pleasant Rhine gardens," he writes in "Vanity Fair," "fair scenes of peace and sunshine—noble, purple mountains, whose crests are reflected in the magnificent stream, who has ever seen you that has not a grateful memory of those scenes of friendly repose and beauty? To lay down the pen and even to think of that beautiful Rhineland makes one happy." His wanderings through the Rhine valley and across the Thuringian hills finally led him to Weimar, famous as the home of Goethe and Schiller. Schiller had died some years before, but Goethe was still living, eighty-two years of age, and honored by everyone as the greatest man in Europe.

If we wish to know what Weimar was like in 1830, when Thackeray learned German and enjoyed life there, we have only to turn to the chapter of "Vanity Fair" called "Am Rhein." It is certainly the most cheerful chapter of that famous book. In it Weimar is described as the "comfortable ducal town of Pumpnickel, standing in the midst of a

happy valley," and the heroine of "Vanity Fair" spends the happiest time of her life there, Thackeray tells us. When he wrote of Amelia's happiness, he must have thought of his own peaceful days in the little capital, and he may well have looked back a little wistfully to that tranquil time of pause before the beginning of his victorious struggle for fame in the great world outside.

The pleasant Weimar life of which Thackeray so soon found himself a part belongs to a past that has quite vanished. The little town with its broad, flat-roofed houses, and the sleepy brown Ilm dawdling—one can hardly say flowing—through it, is still visited by lovers of Goethe and Schiller. But the duchy of which Weimar is the capital has become part of a larger Germany, with no such simple friendly little court as there was during Thackeray's stay, when a group of young Englishmen, some learning diplomacy, others learning nothing more difficult than the art of passing time pleasantly, were made thoroughly at home by the Grand Duke and all his nobles. Thackeray took to the easy-going court life with much readiness. He wrote home for an officer's commission in the yeomanry, so that he might have a handsome and respectable uniform to wear as his court dress, and bought a

sword which had once belonged to Schiller, as a finishing touch to his costume. There were plenty of balls for him to attend in his fine uniform, and no lack of charming young ladies of the court for him to admire. A letter to his mother contains an amusing drawing of one of them, whose eyes are flashing killing glances at the young Englishman, but, as the same letter contains the cheerful admission that he has been cut out by another and a richer visitor, we may conclude that the damage to his heart was not very serious.

Thackeray met Goethe only once. Though the old poet no longer took a formal part in Weimar society, his home, over which his daughter-in-law presided, was always open to visitors, and he sometimes received specially-favored guests in his own room. Thackeray was honored with this privilege, perhaps because of his amusing caricatures, which he was as fond of drawing for the children in Weimar as he had been for the lads of the Charterhouse, and some of which had been seen by Goethe. In a letter written a quarter of a century later to the English biographer of Goethe, George Henry Lewes, Thackeray tells how kindly he was welcomed, yet how he was overawed by his famous host, who was magnificent and impressive in old

age as in youth. When Thackeray wrote the letter to Mr. Lewes, he too had become famous, but the place which the friendly life at Weimar always filled in his memory can be seen from the sentence with which the letter ends: "With a five and twenty years' experience since those happy days, and an acquaintance with an immense variety of human-kind, I think I have never seen a society more simple, charitable, courteous, gentlemanlike, than that of the dear little Saxon city, where the good Schiller and the great Goethe lived and lie buried."

The life at Weimar, however happy, could not last long, for Thackeray at twenty still had the world to face and his career to choose. He chose the law, or rather, had it chosen for him by his elders. Small wonder that, though he was at first all eagerness to be about his task of mastering the profession that offers so many prizes, he soon wearied of the snail-like progress along the dusty, folio-bordered footpaths of the law. He drew fancy portraits of himself in the legal attire that he never wore—portraits hinting plainly enough at his belief that the law rewards its followers too slowly. But it was not alone the delay for which the law is proverbial that damped the ardor with which he had begun his studies. The tedious, musty



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documents he had to master were a very poor substitute for the flesh-and-blood human beings whose fortunes then, as always, he loved to follow.

The old Temple, with its labyrinth of walks and its quiet gardens, dear to all lovers of the London of the eighteenth century, was the scene of Thackeray's legal studies. Little as he liked the law, he could not help loving the antique buildings and the quaint courts that had echoed to the footsteps of Dr. Johnson and Boswell and Goldsmith, as well as to the imagined tread of so many characters that live only in books. He himself has added two more to the imaginary folks that the "kind faith of fancy," to borrow his own expression, makes as real as the actual people that belong to history. Pendennis and his friend Warrington in the novel of "Pendennis" have chambers in the Temple, and from many a page in the story we learn what Thackeray's own experiences were when he read law, more or less diligently at 1 Hare Court. Indeed, next to the Charterhouse, the Temple is the place in London richest in memories of Thackeray, and when, on a beautiful July afternoon in 1911, the hundredth anniversary of Thackeray's birth was commemorated, the spot chosen by his

daughter and his publisher was the gardens of the Middle Temple.

But the old-time charm of the Temple Gardens was not enough to keep Thackeray, any more than Arthur Pendennis, fast bound by the chains of his legal studies. The end of his first year in the



THE MIDDLE TEMPLE GARDENS

Temple found him arrived at the age of twenty-one, and possessed of an income that, though not large, made him independent. Shortly afterwards he reached a sudden decision, and deserted law for literature.

It was a difficult road that he had chosen to travel—curiously difficult for him, when one thinks of the greatness of his gifts. No one who knew

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him had any doubt of his genius, but not until "Vanity Fair" was written, sixteen long years after the beginning of his literary career, did he take his true place among the first writers of the day. Nor did the time of waiting for success bring him any of the pleasant leisure of the earlier years. The fortune that he had counted on to give him freedom was his for but a short while, thanks to badly-chosen investments and other pieces of ill luck, and thenceforward it was necessary for him to earn his living by his pen. Yet when once his readers had realized that the author of "Vanity Fair" was the greatest novelist of his time, not fortune alone, but fame and honor came to him rapidly. He welcomed his rewards, but was not tempted to care too much for them. "Pray God, keep us humble!" he wrote to a friend in the height of his success.

We may sometimes wonder whether Thackeray would have chosen the calling of literature had he known that long years must pass before he could come to his own, and gain the place to which his genius entitled him. His life might, perhaps, have been easier had his choice been different. Yet the world would be the poorer without the story of that brave and honorable struggle, for it is the record

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of a great writer who, in all the chances and changes of life, held fast to the lesson that he taught in his famous lines :

“ Who misses or who wins the prize,  
Go lose or conquer as you can ;  
But if you fail or if you rise,  
Be each, pray God, a gentleman.”



## CHARLES DICKENS

THERE is in Kent, the garden county of England, near the twenty-seventh milestone from London, a house on a hill whose name is at least as old as Shakespeare. It was at Gad's Hill that Sir John Falstaff, the jolly fat knight in the play of King Henry IV, once ordered his boon companions to meet him for a little expedition whose purpose we can easily guess. "But, my lads, to-morrow morning, early at Gad's Hill," said that prince of highwaymen. "There are pilgrims going to Canterbury with rich offerings, and traders riding to London with fat purses."

Long after Sir John and the pilgrims had gone their way, a dignified red brick house was built on the summit of that hill. The builder was a wealthy man who, without much need for writing or spelling, had risen from the rank of stable-boy to be "the *mare* of Rochester," as he sometimes styled himself. The good man's building being of better quality than his spelling, his house endured and Gad's Hill Place became a sort of landmark to

the people of the neighboring towns of Chatham and Rochester as they traveled up and down the highway. Time went on, and the red house had a new owner, a clergyman who had fallen in love with it when he was only a boy, as he was fond of telling. He would, no doubt, have been greatly surprised if he had known that another boy, a very little lad, sometimes walked on Sundays all the way from Chatham with his father to see the house that always seemed to him the most wonderful house in the world.

The little lad, who was sickly and delicate, had read a great many books and knew how the fat Falstaff had once come to Gad's Hill in a great hurry and run away even faster. But he had spirit and ambition too, and when his father said to him on one of their walks, that if he were to work very hard he might perhaps some day come to live in that very house, it must have filled his small head with dreams and hopes for the future. The boy was Charles Dickens, and he did, many years after, become the owner of Gad's Hill Place, which has ever since been a landmark, not only for the people of Kent, but for his readers all over the world.

At several points along the southern coast of



**Charles Dickens**





England, there were in the early part of the last century, just as there are to-day, great stations for ships and for naval supplies, and at Portsea, which is now a part of Portsmouth, the chief of these



BIRTHPLACE OF CHARLES DICKENS  
387 Commercial Road, Portsea, Portsmouth

stations, Charles Dickens was born, in the year 1812. His father was at the time a clerk in the Navy Pay Office and lived in a two-story house with a tiny garden in front. The house is still standing, and in it are gathered together numbers

of interesting things that once belonged to the great writer who first saw the world through its narrow windows.

Although he was only two years old when his family moved away from Portsmouth, Charles could always remember toddling about the little garden with his older sister, Fanny, of whom he was very fond. He remembered, too, that he came away from his first home in the snow, when his father's duties carried him to London, where they lived until Charles was four years old. Again his father was transferred, this time to the Pay Office of the Royal Dockyard at Chatham. In that bustling, noisy town in the pleasant county of Kent, the boy spent the happiest years of his childhood, storing away in his busy brain many pictures of things and of people that the great novelist was one day to use for the delight and wonder of his readers.

"I could never tell exactly where Chatham ended and Rochester began," wrote Dickens many years afterwards, "and certainly it would be impossible to do so to-day. Yet the towns are quite different, although they stretch, side by side, along the broad curves of the River Medway. At Chatham are the busy wharves, mills, and docks of the Royal Navy-yard founded by Queen Elizabeth, and barracks for

the regiments of artillery and infantry that are quartered nearby. Every day there was work to be done in that busy spot that even an ordinary small boy would have delighted in watching. Ropemakers and anchor-smiths toiled at their tasks, soldiers at drill in their gay uniforms marched briskly to the sound of drum and fife, while farther away convicts with clanking chains moved heavily up and down the decks of the great, black prison-ships—a blot on the bright scene, perhaps, but nevertheless most interesting to a boy. From the memory of this particular watcher the recollection of “the hulks,” as the prison-ships were called, never faded. When he came to write “Great Expectations,” more than forty years later, he made poor frightened Pip come to the aid of an escaped convict who needed to leave his telltale chains behind him in the quiet marshes. True to his faith that goodness can exist in people’s lives in spite of evil, he made much of what should have been the happiness of Pip’s later life grow out of his being the means of help to the unhappy prisoner.

An occasional sail with his father was among the small boy’s pleasures at that happy time, and he caught his first glimpses of the open sea when the Navy Pay Yacht, a queer old-fashioned vessel, was

sent down to Sheerness where the Medway joins the Thames. But, for the most part, his delight in those early days lay in watching the queer and picturesque characters that are to be found in seaport towns all the world over. There are many such to be seen in Chatham to-day, sturdy old sea-captains and sailors from distant lands, and there must have been many more when Dickens haunted its streets as a boy.

The comfortable three-story house in which his family first settled at Chatham is to-day very near the town railway station. Its windows look out on the long trains that have taken the place of the stage-coaches that used to travel the English highways with loud cracking of whips and blowing of horns when Dickens was a boy, but in all other ways the house is quite unchanged. In it Charles Dickens grew up, "a very queer small boy," as he described himself long afterwards. His queer-ness consisted in his being weak and sickly and therefore unfit for active outdoor life. He was not good at games of any kind. But his mother had taught him to read very early and, though he always enjoyed watching other boys at their sports, he was never without a private pleasure of his own besides, for he often read while they played.

Charles had at that time a nurse named Mary Weller, who lived to be a very old woman and used to tell how he was "a terrible boy to read" and very fond of singing comic songs and reciting. One of his favorite pieces was Dr. Watts's "Voice of the Sluggard," which he used to recite with appropriate action, giving the first stanza especially with great effect:

"'Tis the voice of the sluggard!  
I hear him complain,  
'You have waked me too soon,  
I must slumber again.'"

It always gave Mary Weller great satisfaction to talk of the early days of her famous charge, and he, for his part, was indebted to her for more than her care of him, since he gave her name to the character that made the fortunes of the book that first brought him success—Sam Weller, in "Pickwick Papers."

The small boy's talents for acting always made him a great favorite at parties and birthday celebrations. His sister Fanny, who had her talents too, could sing very well, and the two children were sometimes put on a dining-table for a stage, from which height they entertained visitors very cleverly.

It was in Fanny's company, too, that he attended his first school, and, no doubt, began to make little pilgrimages to his favorite spots in the old-fashioned city of Rochester.

How dearly he loved them all—the square gray castle with square towers at each corner rising at



ROCHESTER CASTLE AND GARDENS

the top of the hill, the quiet cathedral near by, where a tablet honors his memory to-day; the Bull Inn, where he must have watched many a merry-making, and even the fields and open spaces of the town—we may know from his own writings. "Pickwick Papers," the first of Dickens's books, and "Edwin Drood," the last, are stories which

take their readers to Rochester, and in many of the later tales and sketches there are scenes and incidents connected with the life of the old city.

When he first revisited it as a man, he smiled to find the High Street, which had once seemed so magnificent, little more than a lane, and the town clock that he had thought the finest in the land "as inexpensive and moon-faced a clock as he ever saw." Yet he loved it all to the very end of his life. Long after he had made himself and Rochester famous, he had one of the balusters of the beautiful stone bridge that had crossed the Medway in his childhood made into a pedestal for a sun-dial in his garden. But there was little fear of his forgetting Rochester at any hour of the day.

The last two years that the Dickens family spent at Chatham saw the beginning of many changes. The father, a kind-hearted, generous man, always inclined to spend more money than he could well afford, began to realize that his debts were not growing smaller as his family grew larger. In an effort to check his troubles, he moved into a smaller house in a plainer part of the town, and from that time on there were fewer gayeties and merry-makings to brighten the lives of his five children.

Charles, nevertheless, was made happier than ever



before by two pieces of great good fortune. With his sister Fanny, he was sent to a good school kept by a kind master, the son of the Baptist minister whose church was next door to his new home. This young man, William Giles, at once realized that his new pupil was a lad of promise and took great pains to teach him and to help him use the knowledge that he had already gained from his books. For many years after the parting with his master, Dickens kept, "for his sake and its own," a copy of "The Bee," by Goldsmith, which his kind friend had given him as a remembrance. And when the "Pickwick Papers," by "Boz," the nickname that Dickens used when writing his first books, were coming out in monthly numbers, filling all England with fun and laughter, we may be sure that no tribute pleased the proud young author more than the gift of a silver snuff-box from his former schoolmaster, with the inscription, "To the Inimitable Boz."

The second piece of good fortune also helped to make the boy successful in after life as well as happy at the moment. In a small, unused room next to his own, which nobody but himself ever troubled to enter, he found a great treasure—some shelves filled with famous books which he at once began

to read with joy and delight. "They came out from that blessed little room," he says of them, "a glorious host to keep me company." Among them were the volumes that Dickens's own hero, David Copperfield, was so fond of—"The Vicar of Wakefield," "Don Quixote," "Robinson Crusoe," and "The Arabian Nights." But he made, besides, not mere acquaintances but lasting friends with many others as well, reading them over and over again until he almost knew them by heart. Like true friends, they went with him when he left Chatham, and one of the worst sorrows of his childhood was the parting with the beloved volumes, that came not very long after that sad change.

It was from an upper window of the small house at Chatham that Charles and his favorite sister used often to look out at the stars shining down on the churchyard not far away. Like all his Chatham experiences, those happy, peaceful evenings never faded from his memory, and, thirty years later, he wrote in "The Child's Dream of a Star" of two other children who watched together every night in love and wonder for their favorite star and never went to sleep without saying to each other, "God bless the Star."

It was well for the boy Charles Dickens and for

the readers of the books that he wrote when he became a man that he had those happy years in Kent. Without them he might not, frail and delicate as he was, have kept the spirit of fun and enjoyment that makes his writings a delight to young and old. To leave the sight of the jolly, red-coated soldiers, the busy, cheerful shipyard, the rugged gray castle on the hill, his good school-master, and all that had made his life bright and happy was hard enough. But to leave it for the dingy ugliness of one of the poorest suburbs of London and for a way of living that left him without hope of school or friends was a blow almost too great to be borne by the ten-year-old boy, brave of spirit though he was. His journey up to London seemed to him an unfavorable beginning, though he traveled by a stage-coach with the cheerful name of "The Blue-eyed Maid." He was the only inside passenger on that dull rainy day and, as he wrote long afterwards, "he found life sloppier than he had expected to find it."

The family had already settled in a part of London called Camden Town, and Charles soon found that his father, either because of his troubles or on account of his easy-going nature, was quite without any plan or purpose for his son's education. And so,

with many a heartache for the happy days that lay behind him, the bright boy became a faithful but neglected little household worker. Day after day, without much hope of better times, he went about his dull tasks, and did the family errands in the streets that seemed to him so ugly and mean.

But in spite of the family misfortunes, there were occasional spots of brightness in the boy's life. An older cousin, James Lamert, who remembered how fond the clever lad had always been of acting and singing, made and painted a toy theater to amuse him. Sometimes, too, there were cheerful visits to his old godfather, a maker of rigging, masts, and oars for his Majesty's navy, who greatly admired the boy's talent for comic singing. But best of all, for it was a lasting joy, he began by degrees to find interest and pleasure in the daily sights and sounds of London. To feel himself a part of the life of the crowded streets or the busy markets brought back the delight in lively scenes that had made the navy yard at Chatham so fascinating a place.

It was always the great, busy City that he loved best of any region in London—the City with its thronged narrow streets where all sorts of wonderful things might happen at any time to a small

wanderer astray in them. In a little sketch called "Gone Astray," which he wrote for a magazine called *Household Words*, and which is unfamiliar to many of his readers because it has only lately been reprinted, he tells of an experience as a childish explorer of these City streets. Lost in the crowded Strand, where he had been taken by "Somebody" to see the lion over the gateway of Northumberland House, he boldly made up his mind to seek his fortune, like Dick Whittington; and set out in doing so by going to pay his respects to the famous Guildhall giants, Gog and Magog. After finding his way to those worthies, and having a nap in their protecting presence, he strolled down to the City, full of reverence, and inspired, he says, "by a mighty faith in the marvelousness of everything." Having one shilling and fourpence in his pocket, he finished the day, after a brief but exciting adventure with a dog whom he christened by the appropriate name of Merrychance, by going to the theater. Only upon coming out into the darkness and the rain did he lose heart and turn to the watchman—the policeman of those days—for help in reaching home. "I have gone astray since," he says, in the whimsical lines which conclude the little paper, "many times, and farther afield."

Perhaps; yet perhaps, too, it is because he kept his childish faith in the marvelousness of things, and faced the unknown bravely throughout his life, that we care to read about him to-day.

But the time soon came when life grew too serious for even the simplest of pleasures. In those days, and for some time after, it was still the custom to imprison people for debt, and to a debtors' prison called the Marshalsea, Mr. Dickens, who had failed to conquer his difficulties, was finally sent. In one of Charles Dickens's later novels, "Little Dorrit," he shows us the Marshalsea prison, with the sordid life going on within its dismal walls, just as it was when he knew it in his boyhood. It marks his sympathy with those who, through misfortune or accident, had to live in its shadow, that Little Dorrit herself, his gentle, good little heroine, is born within the prison. And even in his first book, "Pickwick Papers," full of jollity as it was, his sad early knowledge of life in a debtors' prison did much to give him his true place as a writer who strove to help the world as well as to amuse it. That there are no debtors' prisons in England to-day is in a large measure due to Charles Dickens's description of Mr. Pickwick's experiences in the Fleet Prison.

Though in the end good was to come of this trial, the family was at first overwhelmed with grief at the father's imprisonment, and none the less so because he himself realized exactly how it had all come about. A man who had twenty pounds and spent nineteen pounds and sixpence would, he explained, be a happy man, but for a man to spend sixpence more than the twenty pounds was to make himself miserable.

Unfortunate as Mr. Dickens was, however, in the management of his business affairs, he had a way of adapting himself cheerfully to all manner of awkward circumstances, and of finding material for happiness even in his misfortunes. He had always a habit of using elaborate flourishes of speech, consisting of extremely long words, as, for example, when he said of a relation who was in very bad health, "I must express my tendency to believe that his longevity is, to say the least, extremely problematical." Both these traits of character readers of "David Copperfield," that story which mirrors so much of Charles Dickens's own life, will find in the eccentric but lovable Mr. Micawber, who is in very fact a portrait of Mr. John Dickens. And as with Mr. Micawber, the friends who laughed at Mr. Dickens's amusing foi-

bles liked him all the better for them. "The longer I live, the better man I think him," his son said of him, when the years had brought a truer understanding of his character.

Once settled at the Marshalsea, therefore, the father soon became his cheerful self again, and the first dinner in the prison at which Charles assisted was, thanks to Mr. Dickens's rapidly-returning light-heartedness, by no means a melancholy meal. But at home things only grew worse, although Fanny had the good fortune to be elected to a scholarship at one of the royal schools of music.

Charles saw his sister's happiness without envy, but with a great longing for some kind friend to help him also to the means of an education. He was much too young to realize that, in his daily journeys to and from the prison, he was learning two things that no school could ever have taught him—a quick sympathy with the joys and sorrows of the poor and humble, and a clear understanding of the queer and quaint characters of that shabby region of London. His stories of the many-sided life about him were to teach and delight the world one day, but he was still a child, and very far from guessing it.



While Mr. Dickens was in prison, most of the family belongings had to be sold, bit by bit, Charles managing affairs in his father's absence as well as he could. The first sale was a painful experience, for the possessions to be parted with were the beloved books that had been brought from Chatham. The second-hand dealer, however, greatly admired the cleverness of the small boy and enlivened the later sales by asking him to recite *mensa mensae*, or conjugate a Latin verb while he counted out the money for him—greatly to the small boy's satisfaction, we may be sure.

It was at this time that the hardest experience of his childhood came about, strangely enough through the cousin who had given him some of the happy hours in his London life. James Lamert had recently become manager of a tumble-down factory by the Thames where blacking was made, and, hearing of the family misfortunes, offered to employ Charles at a salary of six shillings a week. Both parents having readily agreed, the next Monday morning saw a heavy-hearted little boy making his way to the counting-house. There he sat down at a low table to learn his new duties under the guidance of a big, shabby boy named Bob Fagin, who came upstairs to instruct him. He was to

cover the bottles of blacking with paper, to tie and clip the covers neatly, and when some dozens of bottles were ready, to paste labels across their fronts.

The cousin had intended to help Charles with his studies at the dinner-hour, but he was a busy man and, in the end, the boy learned nothing but deftness with his scissors and paste. It was the loss of all hopes of an education that made his worst unhappiness at that time. All the rest he might have borne, but there was no talk of school for him, even if brighter days should come. He felt, only too truly, that his parents had forgotten that there could be any difference between a boy who longed to learn and the ignorant working lads below stairs in the rickety factory. He soon discovered, however, that the rough boys could be kind-hearted in a fashion of their own and, carrying his table down to theirs, he did his daily work in their company. They realized somehow that "the young gentleman," as they called him, was different from the rest of them, perhaps because he sometimes told them stories from the books that he had lost, and they always treated him with respect. Bob in particular was his staunchest protector, once going far out of his way to see the small boy safely home

after one of his old attacks of pain. But Bob's helpfulness was only a further trial to the invalid, who shrank from confessing about the prison. To escape from his difficulty, he pretended that he lived in a house near Southwark Bridge, and dismissed his escort with thanks on the steps of this make-believe home. Even after Bob had departed, he knocked at the door and asked a question (it was, "Did Mr. Robert Fagin live there?") of the woman who answered his knock, so that his innocent deception might not fail in case Bob happened to look back. Kind as were his fellow-workers, the boy's pride was too bitterly hurt by the circumstance which had brought him among them for him to take even the friendliest of them into his confidence.

By this time the mother and the younger children of the family had gone to live in the Marshalsea, where, strange to say, they were more comfortable than they had been for many a month before. For Charles a lodging was at first found at a long distance from the prison, in the house of a not very amiable old lady, whose portrait readers of "Dombey and Son" will find in Mrs. Pipchin, little Paul's guardian at Brighton. He now began to take the responsibility of buying his own meals and manag-

ing his own small affairs, except on Sunday, when he escorted his sister Fanny to the prison, where they spent the day. He tried manfully to be careful of his money, sometimes wrapping it up in six equal packages with the name of the day of the week written on each. But in spite of his resolutions, a bit of pastry or a slice of pudding with fine large currants sometimes tempted him, and then there was less money for the next day. There was a show-van at the corner, too, hard for a fun-loving lad to neglect, and a penny periodical to carry home, especially on Saturday nights, when six shillings seemed a huge sum and Monday a time very far distant.

In the end the loneliness grew too hard for the boy to bear, and a room near the prison was found for him. This time his landlady and her family of husband and son were pleasant, kindly people whose goodness to their small lodger he gratefully repaid years afterwards by making them the originals of the worthy Garland trio in "The Old Curiosity Shop." Still another humble friend of those early days, a quick-witted little orphan girl whom the Dickens family had brought from the Chatham workhouse to be their only servant, lives in the pages of the same book as the queer, clever little maid-of-

all-work whom Dick Swiveller christens "The Marchioness."

Once settled where he could join the family group at meals and their evening talks, he took endless pleasure in hearing all that his mother could tell him of the history of the other prisoners, and in watching their faces to guess the rest. On one occasion, when all the inmates of the Marshalsea were gathered together to sign a petition to be allowed to celebrate the King's birthday, the delight of Charles knew no bounds. Safe in his corner, he watched them all, understanding both the fun and the pathos of the scene and liking it far better than any play that he had ever heard of.

Not long after, Mr. Dickens was, by a most unexpected piece of good fortune, set free from prison, but neither to him nor to anyone else did it occur to set Charles free from the blacking factory. He had always done his work there with the utmost thoroughness and had earned the respect as well as the affection of his rough fellow-workers. But the notice and opportunity that he had longed for seemed as far away as ever, when suddenly his father and James Lamert quarreled. All at once his prospects in life were changed. Half-bewildered, he learned that he was to leave the blacking bottles

forever, and that kind-hearted Bob and his comrade Poll, the cookshop where he bought his midday meal, and the show-van at the corner were to know him no more.

The school to which Charles was sent soon after had the imposing name of Wellington House Academy and stood near the Hampstead Road. It was a private school of the old-fashioned kind that has fortunately passed away. The master, a stalwart Welshman, knew little about boys except the art of caning them regularly. Being a day scholar Charles escaped that part of his education, and, for the rest, the boys were not much occupied with their books. They were in the habit of keeping in their school-desks small pet animals whose training was attended to much more carefully than that of their owners. White mice were the chief favorites, and Charles always remembered the grief of the school when the mouse that was cleverest, perhaps because he lived in the cover of a Latin dictionary, fell into a deep ink-well and was drowned.

The adventures of white mice and their owners were not, it is true, the things that Charles Dickens had dreamed of when he longed for a school and for teachers. None the less, the boyish fun and

happy-go-luckiness did him good. The tedious work and rough companionship at the factory, as well as his father's imprisonment, had given him a feeling of strangeness in the company of boys who had always had homes and friends and schools. Happily the feeling passed away as he began to throw himself with his natural eagerness into the life around him. With one of his comrades he was soon writing a weekly newspaper, demanding payment in marbles or slate-pencils from all who wished to read it. The paper was by no means too serious, as the following extract will show: "Lost—By a boy with a long red nose and gray eyes, a very bad temper. Whoever has found it may keep it, as the owner is better without it." And with another comrade he planned and carried out many a lively dramatic entertainment, Charles being always the leader on the stage, while his friend painted the scenery, to the admiration and wonder of the school.

Dickens used to tell in after life how his father, on being asked on one occasion where his son was educated, replied: "Why indeed, Sir, ha!—ha!—he may be said to have educated himself!" There was much truth in the jest. He was taught little Latin in his two years at Wellington House Acad-

emy and little law in the two years that followed, but the world of schoolboy life and the ways and manners of lawyers he learned for himself thoroughly, as many of his stories show. How he taught himself to be the cleverest shorthand writer in London and, a little later, learned under the same teaching to write clever literary sketches until the day came when with tears of joy and pride he saw himself in print for the first time, belongs to the story of the great writer's early manhood. His boyhood ends with the parting with his school-mates at Wellington House Academy. To them he always seemed a bright, lovable lad, erect in his bearing, and quicker than the rest to find fun in things or to provide fun where it was lacking. Neither then nor for long years after did he speak of the sadder days of his childhood, and so well did he keep the secret when he was a man that not until after his death did his own children know that in telling the story of David Copperfield he had been telling his own.

It is pleasant to know that the writer who gave the world more child characters than any other had ever created went back, when honored and famous, to live among the scenes that he had loved in his own childhood. In another sense, too, the begin-



ning and the end of his life seem to touch, in spite of the busy years that lay between them, for the grown man always kept the same warmth of feeling



GAD'S HILL PLACE, NEAR ROCHESTER  
Famous home of Charles Dickens in later life

and quickness of sympathy that had belonged to the little boy.

Towards the end of Dickens's life, a reader whom he had never seen sent him a gift—a silver centerpiece which had been designed with four figures representing the four seasons of the year. When the gift arrived, Spring, Summer, and Autumn were there in all their beauty, but the fourth figure was

lacking. The giver had felt that Winter could have no place in the life and work of Dickens. To that reader Dickens was always young in heart, and to all who know him and his works, young in heart he must always remain.



## ROBERT BROWNING

CAMBERWELL, the birthplace of Robert Browning, is to-day one of the crowded boroughs of London, and a region in which there is little of beauty or of interest to be seen. But in 1812, the year in which the poet was born, Camberwell was a village with pleasant tree-lined streets and well-kept homesteads set in green gardens, where nightingales poured forth their songs fearlessly on moonlight evenings in the spring. From the hill above the village church, the lights of London, fainter then than in these days of electricity, could just be seen across the Thames, and over the fields there floated now and then the cheerful note of a coach-horn, as the coach wound its way along the Dover Road to a well-earned rest at the ancient tavern known as "The Elephant and Castle."

The poet's parents had spent much of their own youth at Camberwell, and they had friends and kindred in plenty about them when they settled in the house in Southampton Street in which both Robert and his sister Sarianna, who was two years

his junior, were born. The career of the poet's father, whose name was also Robert, had indeed at one time threatened to be a stormy one. Having been sent at twenty to the West Indies to learn the



YORK STREET CHAPEL, NOW CALLED BROWNING HALL,  
Where Robert Browning was baptized

management of an estate that belonged to his family, he was so greatly shocked at learning that the sugar plantations were worked by slave labor that, giving up all hope of gain in that part of the world, he returned with all speed to England.

His father, a practical, energetic man of business, was angered beyond measure at what he regarded as folly. It appeared that the young man's sym-

pathy with the slaves had gone so far that he had actually tried to teach a negro boy to read! The generous feelings that had prompted the son's behavior were quite incomprehensible to the father, who had been brought up in a time when slavery was commonly regarded as part of the necessary and natural order of things, while the son, hurt and bewildered at the ways of what seemed to him a topsy-turvy world, could only feel that he must henceforth find his own way in life. The way that he found was a clerkship in the Bank of England, not at first sight a very original choice, since it was an occupation that his father had followed. But though it suited his tastes little better than the career that he had just abandoned, it at least left his conscience clear, and moreover, since the hours were short, gave him time for home thoughts and interests.

His marriage to the poet's mother took place not long afterwards, not without a protest from his father, who still considered him a scatter-brained youth, likely to do more harm than good in the world. None the less, the young man persevered in the ways that he had chosen for himself, spending all the active years of his life in the faithful service of "the old lady in Threadneedle Street,"

as the Bank of England is sometimes called, and finding the happiness of his leisure hours in his family and in his well-stocked library across the river at quiet Camberwell. The younger Robert Browning owed much to his father's love of books and cultured tastes, as he was always proud to say, but he owed perhaps even more to the generous sympathies and the independence of character that had made his father face loss of ease and comfort in his early manhood for conscience' sake.

The poet's mother was of mixed Scotch and German ancestry, but in appearance and manner a perfect type of the gentle, high-bred Scottish lady. From her he inherited a love of animals and plants that gave him many happy hours in boyhood and, in later years, the power of seeing vividly and describing swiftly that comes of close observation early in life. To his mother he owed, too, his intense love of music. She was a natural musician, able to play with grace and feeling, and fond of touching the keys of her piano softly, as the twilight fell in her peaceful flower-garden and the shadows deepened about her in the quiet sitting-room.

One of the poet's earliest recollections of his mother was of her playing the Grenadier March



**Robert Browning**  
**After the portrait by Field Talfourd**





of Charles Avison, an eighteenth-century composer about whom he himself, when grown to be an old man, wrote one of his last long poems. Robert Browning always believed greatly in the influence of music on the mind of man.

“There is no truer truth obtainable  
By man, than comes by music,”

he wrote in his poem about the old composer whose marching music he had loved to listen to in his childhood.

It was on one of the peaceful twilight evenings spent at her piano that his mother first discovered her little son's love of music. He had crept unobserved down the stairs to listen to her playing and, when she stopped, rushed into her arms, whispering excitedly, “Play, play!” The wise poet of the English lake-country who wrote the line, “The child is father of the man,” might well have found proof of his wisdom in the life of a younger poet who was growing to manhood as he himself neared old age; for much of the might and power of Robert Browning's poetry had its beginning in the thoughts and feelings of his early childish days.

Like most clever children of those industrious times, he could read and write before he was five

years old. Before that time he had begun to invent rhymed verses of his own to celebrate special events in his calendar.

“Good people all, who wish to see  
A boy take physic, look at me,”

is said to have been one of his earliest efforts. Poetry must, on that occasion at least, have been a useful art, for the medicines given to children in those far-away days were usually so bitter as to make some aid to cheerfulness very desirable and indeed quite necessary.

Not long after his fifth birthday Robert had his first experience of school life. It was a brief one, though not for the usual reasons. The other small boys who attended the elementary school, which was quite close to the Browning home, and kept by a very gentle, conscientious lady, were, it appears, much less clever than Master Browning at the mysteries of reading and spelling. In fact such things were to him no mysteries at all, but only matters of common everyday interest. In a short time it became evident that even in a primary school one may pay a penalty for being too clever, and Master Browning was removed by his parents in order that his teacher might not, on his account, lose some

of the less adventurous members of her flock. It was none too soon, for several mothers had begun to shake their heads and wonder if she might not be neglecting their sons for the sake "of bringing on Master Browning."

Master Browning thereupon continued his studies at home and "brought himself on" in all sorts of valuable knowledge by learning to find his way about in many of the rare and interesting volumes of his father's library. His lifelong interest in out-of-the-way characters and unusual knowledge was, as his sister explained many years later, only the natural result of his fondness for old books in his boyhood. Old histories and legends were so much a part of his own everyday experience that it was always a little hard for him to realize that other people might not feel on the same familiar terms with them and be in consequence not a little puzzled to find them put into poetry. He was always as far above his fellows in those matters as he had been in the primary spelling class, which is perhaps one reason why his poems gained friends and readers slowly for so many years.

As he himself always wished people to remember, there have been few fathers like his, gifted with a

wonderful store of knowledge and finding his greatest pleasure in encouraging his children to share his tastes. It was always said of Mr. Browning that he could enter his library of several thousand volumes in the dark and lay his hand unhesitatingly on any book that he wished to find. He was noted, too, for his interest in out-of-the-way books, for he could often tell in which of the little dingy bookshops of the city a certain edition of a rare work was to be found.

Many of the treasures that Mr. Browning discovered on his expeditions to his favorite haunts found their way to his own shelves, where they were sure to find themselves in very good company. When books that came into his possession needed rebinding, he always had several blank sheets put between the covers, so that he might have room for the notes and comments that he frequently wished to make. He was particularly fond of collecting and reading books about painting and the lives of the famous artists of the world, a taste which, handed down to his son, caused the younger Robert Browning to write some of his most interesting poems by putting the life stories of great artists into poetry, as he did in "Andrea Del Sarto," "Fra Lippo Lippi," and "Pictor Ignotus"—perhaps the

best-known poems ever written about the artist's life.

In a poem about his childhood, written when he was quite an old man, the poet tells how, when he was very young, he learned, with his father's help, the story of the Siege of Troy, first from a game, then from Pope's "Iliad," and lastly from the Greek of the great Homer himself. The poem begins with an account of the game:

"My father was a scholar and knew Greek.

When I was five years old, I asked him once,

'What do you read about?' 'The Siege of Troy.'

'What is a siege and what is Troy?' Whereat,

He piled up chairs and tables for a town,

Set me a-top for Priam, called our cat,

Helen, enticed away from home (he said)

By wicked Paris——"

And as the poem proceeds to relate, the game went merrily on, the dogs Towzer and Tray playing the part of the Atridæ, who of course wanted to get Helen back by taking Troy; the pony out in the stable being the Achilles of the occasion sulking properly in his tent; and the family page-boy, the noble Hector, until the younger Robert "rightly understood the case at five years old." He had, be-

sides, the satisfaction of being the possessor of a fine new game which he was soon found sharing with his playmates. Whereupon, as the poem goes on to tell, his father, quick to seize an opportunity, explained how splendidly the whole story had been told by Pope in his version of "The Iliad," and Robert was soon busy with that fascinating volume. Another timely hint, let fall by his father a few years later, roused him to labor hard at his Greek, that he might read for himself "The Iliad" of Homer. So the thing was done! Truly there is much virtue in games and sometimes much wisdom in fathers.

Apart from their usefulness as actors in historical games, Robert always felt a keen interest in the animals that belonged to his household. He felt, if possible, a keener one in the out-of-door creatures whose acquaintance he was fortunate enough to make from time to time. When he was very young he used to refuse to take necessary medicines unless certain speckled frogs were caught for him, and caught they were by his patient mother in the strawberry beds behind the house. Later he began to keep all sorts of small animals as pets,—hedgehogs, magpies, and even snakes—carrying them now and then into the house in his pockets

for his mother's admiration or for medical attention, as the case might be.

In his boyhood, to his great delight, a famous menagerie "for foreign birds and beasts" was moved from its crowded quarters in the Strand, where passing horses often shuddered to hear the angry roars of its denizens, to a more suitable region south of the Thames and quite near Southampton Street. There Robert spent many happy hours before the animal cages, watching intently and admiring greatly, much like other boys. But, unlike other boys, he sympathized keenly with the longing for freedom which he realized that the great beasts, and especially the magnificent lion, the pride of the menagerie, must feel. Years afterwards, when retelling a medieval French story in his poem called "The Glove," he described the feelings of a noble lion in captivity, and the lion that he had in mind was the dignified friend of his early Camberwell days.

Both the poet and his sister were, as little children, great lovers of animal stories, but quite unable to bear the thought of unhappy experiences for their favorites. Even well-known fables had sometimes to be given pleasanter endings than rightfully belonged to them, lest they might cause



more pain than pleasure to the tender-hearted pair of young listeners. Of the nobler qualities of dogs and of horses, Browning always had a keen appreciation. The pony of his childhood was succeeded in his affections by a good horse, the property of his favorite uncle, and on its back he enjoyed many a rapid gallop along the lanes in the early mornings. It was the memory of those breezy excursions in the company of his sturdy four-footed friend that prompted him, some years later, to write the spirited poem, "How they Brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix," in which a horse is the hero and the galloping meter of such lines as

"Neck by neck, stride by stride, never changing our  
pace,"

suits the subject admirably.

In another of his poems, called "Muleykeh," Browning sets forth with much insight and sympathy the devoted affection of an Arab Sheik for his favorite mare—an affection so great that he preferred losing Muleykeh, "his pearl," forever to having her beaten in speed by a rival. "Tray" shows perhaps better than any of Browning's other poems his appreciation of the faithful devotion to duty of which dogs are often capable; in fact, the

poet makes it clear that a noble-hearted dog may well put to shame the type of man whose first thoughts are always of self.

Stories are frequently told of poets which seem to prove conclusively that they, more often than people in other walks of life, keep many of the tastes and interest of their childhood as they grow older. All of Robert Browning's friends in the later years of his life were familiar with his love and sympathy for animals. In one of the London homes that he had as an elderly man, a large white owl was an honored and dignified member of the household. And in the garden of the same house were kept two large tame geese who were so sure of the poet's affection that they nestled lovingly up to him whenever they were called. To the never-failing delight of Browning's friends they were named *The Quarterly* and *The Edinburgh*, after two magazines that were sometimes harsh and not otherwise critics of poetry. But the imposing sound of their names was evidently no bar to their affection for their master, perhaps—who knows?—an added charm. To the very end of his life Browning kept the strange power over animals which he had inherited from his mother. During his daily roadside walks on his last visit to Italy, the little shining

lizards with which that country abounds used to hurry from their hiding-places to answer to his low whistle. One wonders sometimes if the famous Orpheus story is wholly a myth or if a little of the power over nature fabled to belong to that ancient Greek may not, now and then, be granted to a modern poet.

For all his early interest in books, Robert Browning's school-days brought him little pleasure. Byron, a poet whom he always admired greatly, was once a pupil at Harrow School near London, and the Harrow boys of to-day have among their school songs one which pathetically asserts that, in Byron's opinion, "poets *shouldn't* have work to do." Robert had no such idea, although he had sometimes tried to write poetry by the time he was sent as a weekly boarder to a school kept by the Misses Ready and their brother at Peckham, about a mile from Camberwell. But he dreaded leaving home, for home was a very delightful and interesting place to him, and, at nine years of age, he had a shrewd suspicion that he should dislike the rules and regulations of boarding-school life. He is said to have been so sure that he could never survive the change that he composed a brief epitaph and rehearsed it at a spot which he thought suitable for his tomb. His

vigor, however, proved greater than he had expected, perhaps because of the happy week-ends spent at home, but he could never be persuaded that his school-days, which lasted until he was fourteen, were anything but a dull and dreary waste of time.

One of his older schoolfellows, who remembered "young Browning" in his first year at Peckham in a neat brown Holland pinafore, the usual garb of small boys in those days, used to tell of the cleverness with which he could hold his own in arguments with bigger boys who much enjoyed drawing him out in talk. He also attracted attention by his skill in drawing funny pictures, a gift inherited from his father, who had the power of making rapid caricatures to illustrate any story that he might be telling, and could draw excellent likenesses too. But though some of the firmest friendships of Robert Browning's life had their beginnings in his early days at Camberwell, they did not grow out of his school experiences. His real self during that period seems always to have been busy with thoughts of the things that he had learned to care for at home—books, music, pictures and, most of all perhaps, the poetry that he was teaching himself to write all the while.

By the time he was twelve, Robert had written

poems enough to make a little volume to which, realizing that his verses had many faults, he gave the name "Incondita," which means, "without form." His parents were not a little proud of their son's efforts, and there was among their friends at Camberwell a young lady with literary tastes who admired them greatly. Miss Flower, who is best remembered as the writer of the well-known hymn "Nearer, My God, to Thee," soon showed the poems to her guardian, Mr. Johnson Fox, a critic of real discernment, and he, finding good reason to commend the juvenile verses, cheered and comforted the writer of them not a little by his praise. The childish volume was never printed and Browning himself destroyed the manuscript when he was older, but he never ceased to regard Mr. Fox as his "literary father." Nine years after the writing of "Incondita," the young poet ventured to publish his first long poem, "Pauline," and it was again Mr. Fox who, as Browning gratefully acknowledged, "warmed the cockles of his heart" with discriminating praise and hearty encouragement.

Meanwhile, Robert's escape from the boredom of school life at Peckham was a source of much satisfaction to him. He does not appear to have had much regard for the headmaster, realizing,

with boyish clear-sightedness, that Mr. Ready was far beneath his own father in range of knowledge and breadth of scholarship. That he might fall short of that high standard and yet be entitled to respect as a schoolmaster seems never to have entered his young critic's head. At any rate, Robert's only pleasant recollections of the school were connected with some amateur dramatics in which he evidently showed some signs of the talent for making characters express themselves dramatically that distinguishes many of his greatest poems.

Years after he had left school, he used to make his friends and even his gentle mother laugh immoderately by describing the method of the weekly hair-brushing and oiling to which he was subjected as a junior pupil. The operation was, it appears, carried on vigorously to the accompaniment of the singing of one of Dr. Watts's hymns, a terrific downward swoop of the brush being used to mark the cadences of the music. But for the rest, there were few memories, comic or otherwise, that the boy cared to carry away with him, when he returned to Camberwell to continue his studies under private tutors.

Until about the middle of the nineteenth century the great universities of Oxford and Cambridge

continued to keep their doors inhospitably closed to students who did not belong to the Church of England. The changes of feeling that swept all such barriers away have, no doubt, brought to those ancient seats of learning many eager students who would in earlier days have been excluded, but perhaps it was as well for Robert Browning that the old ways were still in force in his boyhood. His parents, who attended one of the Nonconformist Protestant Chapels, had much greater freedom in planning his education than if he had been intended for a university career, and, instead of the unvarying diet of Latin and Greek which would have been his portion at any of the great public schools in those days, there was set before him a more varied stock of knowledge.

He worked hard at French and Italian, though he neglected mathematics. He learned to fence, box, and dance. He read history and literature to his heart's content, and studied music devotedly under competent teachers, learning both to play the piano and to understand the mysteries of harmony and other branches of musical composition. Here again his youthful studies bore rich fruit in later days, for, while many poets have written of noble music as it fills the listener with delight, Browning has

interpreted the thoughts that fill the composer's mind as he watches the obedient keys work out the inspiration of their master.

It is interesting to know that when the poet, who in his youth had no part in the life of the great universities, was nearing the dignity of his seventieth year, both Oxford and Cambridge were proud to present him with an honorary degree. Browning, for his part, was equally proud to accept the honor, realizing that it meant that his poems had found many readers among the students whose friendly greetings had often cheered his heart. Oxford degrees are conferred once a year in the Sheldonian Theater in the presence of distinguished visitors and as many students as can crowd themselves into the hall. In the June of 1882 the ceremonies were much enlivened by an unexpected addition to the program. A sportive undergraduate, whose sense of humor had evidently been stirred by the title of one of Browning's volumes of poetry, "Red Cotton Nightcap Country," let down from the gallery a red cotton nightcap, which dangled fantastically over the poet's head just as his name resounded through the hall. The penalty for the joke might well have been severe had not the newly-made Doctor of Laws pleaded



for the culprit's pardon, suggesting that he was no doubt imitating the antics of the medieval jester, whose office it used to be to mock at the newest receivers of university honors.

Not far from Camberwell is a place called Dulwich, which has, in a quaint old college, a small but



DULWICH COLLEGE AND PICTURE GALLERY IN 1830

very interesting picture gallery containing some fine examples of the French, Italian, and Spanish schools of painting. Dulwich gallery still holds its own in the affection of art-lovers, and to a boy fresh from poring over histories of art and the lives of artists in his father's library it must have been a veritable wonderland. To his delight and never-ending gratitude, Robert was ad-

mitted as a regular visitor to the gallery some years before he had reached fourteen, the usual age. He used to make his way there often, past the little picturesque cottages and across the green meadows that lay between Camberwell and Dulwich. Then, marching by the pictures that were not the object of his visit, he would settle down on a bench to spend a good hour before the one that he had chosen to study on that occasion. It was at Dulwich that he first saw a Madonna by Andrea Del Sarto, the Italian artist who was known as "the faultless painter," and at Dulwich that the great Raphael became more than a name to him. And it was undoubtedly to his early love for the Dulwich gallery and appreciation of its treasures that he owed so much of the interest in Italy and in Italian art that helped to bring joy and happiness into his later life.

There are few young poets whose verses do not show, either in their form or their thought, the influence of other poets. The friends who had praised the writer of "Incondita" for his boyish efforts realized all the while that he owed a great deal to his admiration for Byron's poetry—indeed, what writer of that time did not! But towards the close of Robert's second year of freedom from school life, he had the memorable experience of

learning to know another "poet's poet," for through a happy accident he became possessed of the writings of Percy Bysshe Shelley.

Robert had almost as quick an eye as his father for the contents of shabby bookstalls and, passing a second-hand stand one day on his way home from a walk, he saw a volume with a label that interested him. That the book contained a poem by a Mr. Shelley and was advertised as "very scarce" was quite enough to set him wondering. The writer, it appeared, was almost unknown and his works were difficult to find, even in London. At last Mrs. Browning, always her son's sure refuge whenever he had his heart on some almost unattainable good, making a journey to a bookseller's in Vere Street where Shelley's works were really to be had, came home with them in triumph, bringing at the same time a volume of Keats's poetry which, the bookseller had assured her, would be sure to please a person who wished to read Shelley.

Never was bookseller a truer prophet! The books had come to Robert on his sixteenth birthday, and they came, as he often told his friends afterwards, on a beautiful May evening when two nightingales were pouring forth their music in the flower-scented garden, just as the two new poets whose

verses he was so eagerly reading were filling his mind with their world-songs of beauty and the love of man for man. It was Shelley that counted most in his life, for Shelley first made him feel that liberty was a thing that must be struggled for, if ever "men were to be as gods and earth a heaven." In a little poem called "Memorabilia," Browning tells how, some years later, he was startled at hearing a stranger in a bookshop make a chance remark about having spoken to Shelley. "And did you once see Shelley plain?" is the eager question with which the poem begins, and the tone of reverent and childlike wonder is marked throughout.

Before Robert had reached his next birthday, it was fast becoming plain to the parents watching him so sympathetically that the poet's life was the only life that could bring him happiness, and to give him happiness was their great desire. There was, however, a project on foot in which Mr. Browning had joined some years before, guided as usual by the thought of his son's advantage and well-being. Many of the more thoughtful persons of that time had come to believe that young Londoners ought not to be deprived of a university education because of the expense of leaving home, or as sometimes happened, by the religious tests

still in force at Oxford and Cambridge, and had gathered by subscription money enough to found a university in London, which is now known as University College. Mr. Browning had cheerfully borne his share of the necessary expense and it was, therefore, arranged that Robert should attend the classes in Greek, German, and Latin at the new building in Gower Street, which, though still lacking dome and wings, was fast becoming a center of interest to many young people. But for one student from Camberwell, at least, the experiment was a brief one—almost as brief as his primary school-days. The Greek class, indeed, counted the handsome dark-haired youth among its members until the end of the term, but no longer. His parents had, as usual, found happiness in putting what seemed likely to be a good gift within his reach, but were, on the other hand, quite without fear of his not being his own best guide in using the talents that had already shown themselves so unmistakably.

The definite choice of poetry as Robert Browning's lifework was made not long afterwards. A career in the Bank of England would always have been open to him, had he desired it, while his talents for music and drawing might well have seemed to point to success in these fields of effort. But Mr.

Browning could never have endured to see his son engage in the daily round of work that had made it difficult for him to give his best thoughts to the things that he cared most for, and he was, for many reasons, warmly in sympathy with his son's desire to devote himself to poetry. He appears to have had himself no small share of ability in writing verses, though his favorite subjects were always humorous, just as his cleverest drawings were generally caricatures. And it counted for much with the devoted father, who in his own youth had desired, of all things, to be an artist, though the Fates had ruled it otherwise, that his only son should wish to enroll himself among the poets "whose thoughts enrich the blood of the world."

And so the young poet fronted the future with courage. High hopes he had, and noble trust and affection he knew that he might always claim from parents and friends alike. Yet there were times of perplexing doubt and darkness for him, too, as there must always be when man or woman bends every power of mind and spirit to understand and express the deeper truths of life. Happily there was no "lack of pence," to hinder the poet's growth in those early years of the nineteenth century, when poets were still regarded by

publishers as unprofitable people. "Pauline," his first long poem, was published at the expense of Mrs. Silverthorne, his mother's sister, and of its successor, "Paracelsus," his parents were proud to defray the cost.

But though far-reaching fame and popularity were slow in coming to Robert Browning, he gained friends and admirers among thinkers and men of letters in a way that seems truly marvelous. At twenty-four it had been said of him by serious critics that he was worthy to be named with Shelley, Coleridge, and Wordsworth! And living in London at that very time was another poet, a woman, who held him in high honor and whose name was one day to be linked with his in a way that was to bring him the greatest happiness of all, as true lovers of poetry always like to remember.

Before that happy day came, the Browning family had removed to a place called Hatcham, not very far away from Camberwell. The new abiding-place, which overlooked the Surrey Hills, had many advantages for all. Large rooms in the upper story gave Mr. Browning ample space for his ever-growing library; Mrs. Browning and her daughter had a garden even more beautiful than the one they had left, while a good coach-house afforded

a comfortable home for "York," the favorite riding-horse of the poet. True to his boyish tastes, he soon discovered another attraction in the garden—a toad who came obediently forth when a bit of gravel was dropped down his hole, and much appreciated having his head tickled gently by a friendly poet.

It was at Hatcham that Robert Browning used to gather roses in his mother's garden to carry to Elizabeth Barrett when she had promised to be his wife, but he never ceased to feel loving gratitude for all the years of happiness that he had known at Camberwell. When he was an old man, famous for his poems about Italian life, a young admirer who wished, no doubt, to be agreeable, said to him that there was no longer any romance in the world except in Italy. "Well," remarked Browning with a smile, "I should always make an exception of Camberwell."





## ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

THE poet Geoffrey Chaucer, who lived and wrote in the reign of King Edward III, and who is called "the father of English poetry," planned to have each of the pilgrims who ride to Canterbury in his celebrated "Tales" tell a story to amuse his fellow-travelers by the way. One of these stories describes some wonderful gifts once sent in friendly fashion by the "King of Arabe and Inde" to his neighbor monarch, "Cambyuskan in the lande of Tartarye."

Chief among the royal gifts was a mighty steed of brass, endowed with the power to take the lucky monarch wherever he might wish to go, and back again, in the space of four-and-twenty hours. The second gift was a mirror wherein the owner might foresee the future, and the third a magic ring, able to make the wearer understand the language of all the birds of field and forest and to know the healing virtues of all flowers and plants.

Gifts worthy of a king, indeed, yet one great power they lacked! Though the present and the

future were, through their aid, made clear to the royal owner, the secrets of the past remained as dark as ever. And so for us, who are no monarchs, there is still one kind of magic left. A scrap of paper, "mute and white," will, if a poet has written his verses on it or an artist drawn a sketch within its narrow margin, bring the world of the past to our minds as swiftly as if we had suddenly come under some strange and potent spell. At once our thoughts travel back to the far-away days when the pen of the writer or the artist worked busily to shape the tiny inky characters on the faded page, and, with the magic bit of paper before our eyes, we are almost the equals of the doughty Cambuscan himself; for we too are possessed of a charm—a charm that can say "Open Sesame" to the gates of "Long-ago."

Those great gates seemed to swing backward with a mighty rush when, in the winter of 1913, there were sold in London the closely-covered pages of the letters written by two English poets to each other, and the manuscripts of some of their poems. It was more than a century since Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett were born, and their childhood was almost a hundred years past, but suddenly that long space of time seemed like a dream. The



**Elizabeth Barrett Browning**  
After the portrait by Field Talfourd



thoughts of many people wandered back to the days when two children who were to be famous poets were growing up in different parts of England, and the story of their lives was remembered and told again as if wholly new.

And there was sold at the same time in London another beautiful reminder of the past—a portrait of one of the children. The picture shows a little girl of about nine years of age, standing in a garden with her pet dog at her side. The child has brown hair and beautiful expressive eyes, and holds with one hand a corner of her apron, which is filled with flowers.

The name of Elizabeth Barrett is known wherever English poetry is read and loved. The story of her life is the story of many poems, some of them written in her happy childhood and others in her girlhood, but the best and most beautiful of them all belonging to the time when she had become the wife of the great poet to whom her famous letters were written, and was known to the world as Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

Though little Elizabeth first saw the light in the far northern county of England which is called Durham, the real home of her childhood and girlhood was Hope End, a place in the west of Eng-

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land, to which her parents went with their little daughter when she was still very young. Hope End was a fit abode for a poet-child, for it is situated in the beautiful Malvern Hills and near the borderland of Wales, which has always been a land of song and story, from the days of King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table down to our own times.

Yet when Elizabeth Barrett wrote in later life of the beautiful scenes of her childhood, in a poem called "The Lost Bower," her thoughts did not turn to the stories of the knights and tournaments that had in earlier days belonged to the west of England. She remembered, instead, the homely tale once told by a plain poet of the west-country, whose heart was stirred, as he wandered over the Malvern Hills, by thoughts of the sufferings and hardships of the poor and needy in his time.

The old poet's name was William Langland, and, like many other writers of the fourteenth century, he used a dream for the framework of his poem, which he called "The Vision of Piers Plowman." But the writer was a sincere and earnest man, who longed to make the world better by rebuking idleness in rich and poor alike and by teaching the lesson of the duty that man owes to his brother man.

"Though he be thine underling here, well may hap in heaven that he be worthier set and with more bliss than thou," is the warning of the Plowman to the Knight who wrongs his poorer neighbors, while he teaches the poor the duty of labor lest hunger come.

Both "The Vision" of the stern old poet and the beloved hills of her childhood, the scenes of his sad wanderings, were in Elizabeth Barrett's thoughts when she wrote:

"Far out, kindled on each other,  
Shining hills on hills arise;  
While beyond, above them mounted  
And above their woods also  
Malvern Hills, for mountains counted  
Not unduly, loom a-row,  
Keepers of Piers Plowman's Vision  
Through the sunshine and the snow."

Long after she had left the Malvern Hills and her childhood behind her, Elizabeth Barrett showed that she too was a "Keeper of Piers Plowman's Vision" of a better and kindlier world for those who toil. In a famous poem called "The Cry of the Children," she wrote of the sufferings of the child-workers in English factories with so much



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simple truth and tender sympathy that all England listened and was stirred to help the sad condition of those overburdened little toilers.

To Elizabeth's childish eyes, the country around Hope End seemed a beautiful, green region,

“Dimpled close with hill and valley,  
Dappled very close with shade,  
Summer snow of apple-blossoms running up from  
glade to glade.”

The grown-up friends of Elizabeth's family who visited the home of her childhood had much the same happy memories of it. Her father had built himself a large country-house in the midst of a beautiful park, surrounded by “sloping hills and all sprinkled with sheep,” as one friend described it. There was a great hall in the house with a high ceiling, and a lofty organ in the hall, the same friend remembered. There was, too, a room called Elizabeth's room, with a high stained-glass window, through which the light used to fall on the fair-haired child, as she sat poring over her book.

She was by no means a lonely child in the great house and park. There were brothers and sisters in plenty to keep her company—ten of them in all by the time Elizabeth began to grow up. A merry

life they must have had, with one another for comrades and all the wholesome pleasure of the beautiful countryside to delight in. The children had their own gardens, too, where they were allowed to dig to their hearts' content and to cultivate the flowers that they liked best. Elizabeth's favorites were white roses, and she often won high praise from her father for the beauty of the rose-bower that adorned her special garden.

Not only the flowers in her garden, but also the little animals that dwelt in its nooks and corners, were a source of interest to Elizabeth. For most of the tiny creatures she had tender-hearted sympathy, keeping a field-mouse for a pet and feeding blue-bottle flies in pity because they were doomed to be the prey of cruel spiders. Years after she had grown up, she wrote to Robert Browning about her childish likes and dislikes, comparing them with his early fondness for animals of all sorts and descriptions. "I think I like frogs, too," the letter reads, "particularly the very little leaping frogs which are so light-hearted as to emulate the birds. I remember being scolded by my nurse for taking them up in my hands and letting them leap from one hand to the other. But for the toad!"—and there follows a confession about a great ancient

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toad, also a dweller in the garden, of whom she stood much in awe, believing not only that he wore a jewel in his head, but that, as she writes, "if he took it into his toad's head to spit at me, I should drop down dead in a moment, poisoned as by one of the Medici."

One and all the children of the Barrett family loved their eldest sister devotedly, the youngest boys, whose Latin names, Septimus and Octavius, were soon shortened into the more English-sounding Septy and Occy, being quite as proud of her as the rest, once they were out of babyhood. But her chief favorite and friend among them all was always her brother Edward, who was two years her junior. He had always a perfect understanding of his sister and she never failed to look to him for help and comfort as long as his life lasted.

In the days when Elizabeth Barrett was growing up, girls of well-to-do families in England were seldom sent to school, but had governesses and tutors at home, from whom they often got a surprising amount of real knowledge. The boys of such families learned Latin and Greek at home until they were old enough to enter one of the great public schools—Harrow, Eton, or the Charterhouse perhaps—an

event which usually happened not long after they were ten years old. When Elizabeth was about nine, her brother Edward began Greek with his tutor. It was not long before his sister found a way to join in his serious studies and, holding her book with one hand, and tenderly clasping her favorite doll with the other, the eager new student persisted until the queer, crabbed characters no longer hid many secrets from her.

Almost from babyhood, she had loved the Greek stories better than any others. As soon as she could read, the English poet Pope's translation of "The Iliad" had made the Greek gods and heroes exceedingly real to her. So real were they that, as she used to say long afterwards, "she dreamed more of Agamemnon than of Moses, her black pony," on whose back she, nevertheless, enjoyed many a scamper through the quiet Herefordshire lanes.

Most children of nine would, however, have forgotten the most interesting of books and fascinating of heroes in the happiness of out-of-door life, but it was different with Elizabeth. In the poem called "Hector in the Garden" she tells how, one year, she laid out in her garden a huge giant made of flowers and named him *Hector, Son of Priam*. He

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must have been a giant pleasanter than most, for he had

“Eyes of gentianellas azure  
Staring, winking at the skies,  
Nose of gillyflowers and box,  
Scented grasses put for locks  
Which a little breeze at pleasure  
Set a-waving round his eyes.”

And the industrious gardener, the poem goes on to say, pleased herself with wondering whether “Old Hector, once of Troy,” might not be happy to rest his war-worn spirit under the tender flowers, making the gentle daisies that formed his breastplate tremble when he sighed.

But before the youthful gardener was many years older, her strong affection for the stories belonging to Greek history had led her to undertake a much more serious task. At the age of fourteen she composed a poem of fifteen hundred lines, called the “Battle of Marathon,” using in her ambitious effort the rhythm of Pope’s “Iliad,” the book that had first drawn her to the Greek stories. A most astonishing piece of work the poem was, and Elizabeth’s father might well be proud of “the poet at his knee,” as she called herself in one of

the poems about her childhood, written many years later.

In the pretty dedication to the "Battle of Marathon" Elizabeth had written: "To him to whom I owe the most, . . . I offer these pages as a small testimony to the gratitude of his affectionate child." Mr. Barrett, not to be outdone in grateful affection, had fifty copies of his daughter's poem printed by a London publisher. One of the little volumes is still in existence and has a place in the library of the British Museum to-day.

Almost as interesting as the poem itself is the preface which Elizabeth composed for her first work. It shows how strong a devotion to liberty she must always have felt, and how natural it was that she should, later in her life, be the writer of fearless poems to defend the cause of liberty in England and in America, but most of all in Italy, the country that she came to love as her second home. After speaking in the preface of the heroic courage shown by the Greeks in their struggle against Persian tyranny, she writes: "The heart which cannot be fired by such a recital must be as cold as the icy waters of the pole; for what is it that can awake the high feelings which sometimes lie dormant in the heart of man if it be not lib-

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erty!" The Italian phrase, "*O bella libertà*," which runs all through one of Mrs. Browning's most



ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING  
After the bust by W. W. Story

famous poems, tells the same story. Liberty was always a beautiful and precious thing to her.

Elizabeth Barrett always remembered in later life how happy she had been with her beloved books in

the days when she spent long peaceful hours, dreaming over them, in the friendly house or under the trees at Hope End. Thinking of those early days, she once wrote: "When I was a child and wrote poems in little clasped books, I used to kiss the books and put them away tenderly because I had been happy with them. This, not because of the verses written in them but from pure gratitude." Her love of stories did not "wear out with her love of plum-cake," as she once laughingly explained, but to it was added, as she grew older, a love of knowledge of many kinds, especially of languages and of literature, that made her in the end one of the most learned women of her time.

There was, however, one member of the Barrett family who looked with dismay, as Elizabeth was growing up, at the prospect of having so much knowledge stored away in one small head. It was, as one might perhaps have guessed, Elizabeth's grandmother, who would have preferred the good old-fashioned way of bringing up a girl. And so she used now and then to remark, with a disapproving shake of her head, that she would rather see Elizabeth's hemming more carefully finished than hear of all that Greek! When one remembers,



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however, that in those industrious days little girls of eight and nine were expected to be skilled needlewomen, it is easy to understand that Elizabeth might sometimes have been less interested in the gentle art of hemming than seemed to her grandmother altogether proper and becoming.

But though her stitches might now and then be longer than was usual or set in a wayward fashion of their own, there was never anything but love and affection for Elizabeth, as she was growing toward womanhood, and never were love and affection better deserved. When she and her favorite brother were very little children, finding her name too long and hard to pronounce, he shortened it in baby fashion to *Ba*, and *Ba* remained a sort of pet name for family use all her life. In the poem called "The Pet Name," Elizabeth Barrett, grown to be a woman, wrote :

" I have a name, a little name."

Uncadenced for the ear.

. . . . .

My brother gave that name to me  
When we were children twain,  
When names acquired baptismally  
Were hard to utter, as to see  
That life had any pain."

Another poem which goes back to the days before "life had any pain" and to her devoted affection for the father whose joy and pride she was, is called "To My Father on His Birthday." In it are the lines:

"When the lyre was scarce awake  
I loved the strings for *thy* loved sake,  
Wooed the kind Muses—but the while  
Thought only how to win *thy* smile."

Indeed it is only simple truth to say of the gifted poetess that all the qualities of heart and mind that did their part to make her a famous woman showed themselves very early in her childhood. Her deep and enduring affection for those whom she held worthy of love and honor, her quick sympathy with all forms of suffering and trouble, her intense love of literature, and her brave devotion to the cause of liberty were always a very real part of her nature. And since to all these good gifts there were added the power to express herself in verse and the will to make poetry an object to live for, there could, as a writer about Elizabeth has said, be no more question of her becoming a poet than of Beethoven's being a musician or of Raphael's being a painter. And poetry was always to Elizabeth

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Barrett a serious art with a serious purpose. In the last stanza of the poem, "Pan is Dead," she has eloquently explained her view of the noble aims and purposes of poetry:

"O brave poets, keep back nothing;  
Nor mix falsehood with the whole!  
Look up Godward; speak the truth in  
Worthy song from earnest soul;  
Hold in high poetic duty  
Truest Truth the fairest Beauty."

And, speaking of her own earnest efforts to set forth the truth with all the might that was in her, she once declared to a friend: "I have *worked* at poetry."

It was never possible for Elizabeth Barrett to do anything except with a quick feeling of enthusiasm that carried her over difficulties that might have daunted her had she stopped to think of them. In one of the letters written to Robert Browning not long before she became his wife, she wrote: "Headlong I was at first and headlong I continue—precipitately rushing forward through all manner of nettles and briars instead of keeping the path; guessing at the meaning of unknown words instead of looking into the dictionary, tearing open letters

and never untying a string—and expecting everything to be done in a minute and the thunder to be as quick as the lightning.”

But alas! headlong ways of rushing into difficulties are sometimes the cause of misfortune, as Elizabeth found to her cost, when she was about fifteen years old. Hurrying one day to saddle her black pony Moses, because there was no one at hand to do it for her without delay, she slipped and fell, and a lifelong weakness of health followed the accident. Fortunately, long before the mishap with black Moses had had time to make itself much felt, the daily brightness of her life had come to lie so much in her love of books and in her happiness in the task of making a poet out of herself that the loss of some of the more active pleasures of everyday life only brought her greater gains in the things that were most precious to her.

The power to find the keenest pleasure in the affection of those about her, and in the beauty of the outdoor world, she always kept, but more and more, as she grew older, the world of books became a sort of magic world to her, in which there moved men and women whose thoughts and feelings she followed with eager interest. She once playfully suggested that her epitaph might fitly read: “Here

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lies the greatest novel-reader in the world." But she read at all times much poetry besides, both ancient and modern, and read it with the generous

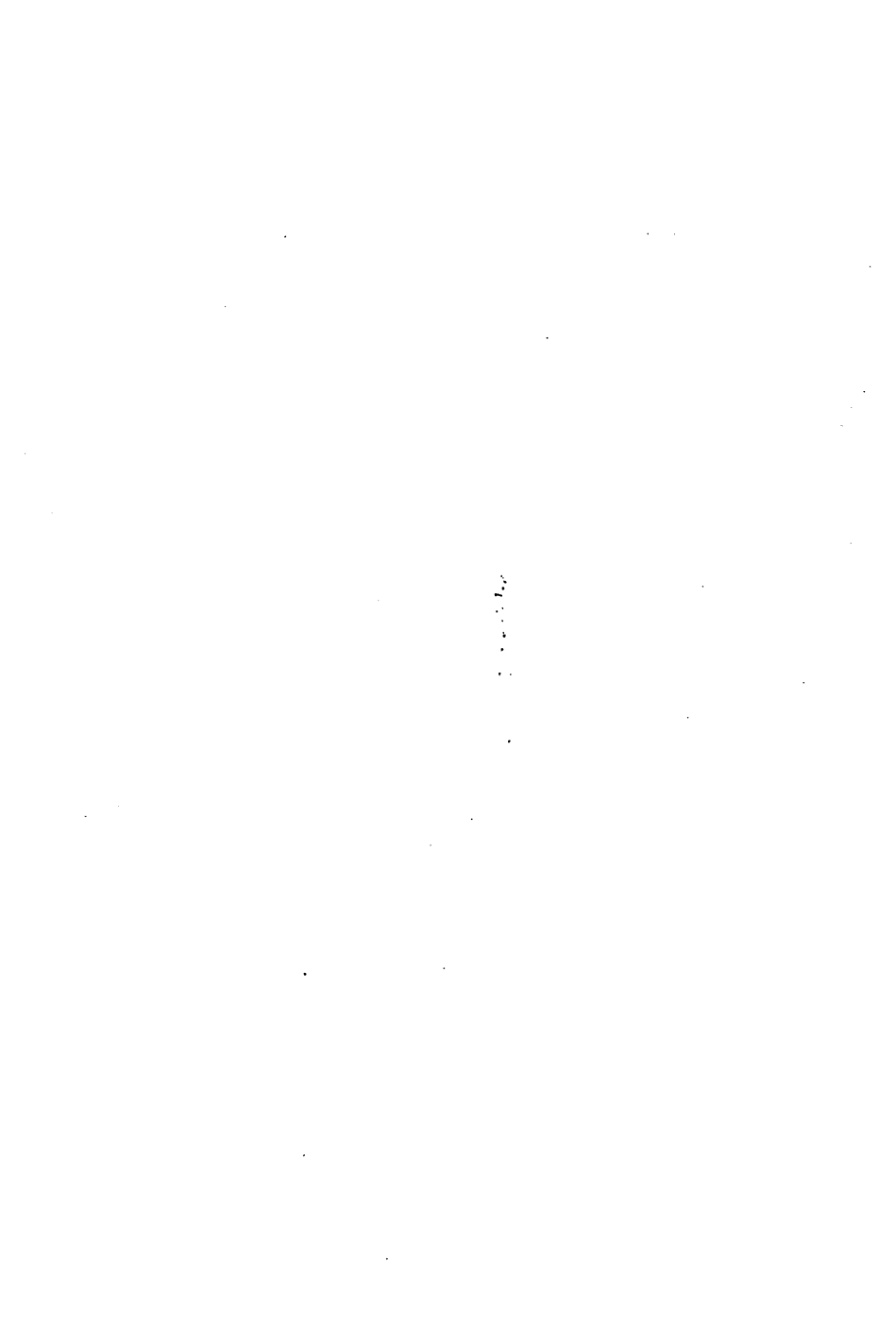


ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING'S HOME IN  
LONDON,  
50 Wimpole Street

sympathy and quick power of appreciation that always belonged to her.

In the days when the happy home of Elizabeth Barrett's childhood and girlhood had been ex-

changed for a tall house in a straight London street, one of the bookshelves in her sitting-room was always filled with the Greek poets and adorned with a bust of Homer, while another held the English poets and a bust of Chaucer. And there was among the English poets, busily writing in London in those later days, one whose work seemed to Miss Barrett to place him in the first rank of poets. How he came, in his turn, to read her poetry and to admire it greatly, and how an elderly gentleman, who was the devoted friend of both poets, played a sort of fairy godfather part so well that, in the end, Elizabeth Barrett became the wife of Robert Browning, is one of the stories that the world loves to remember, for it is a story of happiness that came of lifelong devotion to all that is true and beautiful both in poetry and in daily living.



## ALFRED TENNYSON

THE words Poet Laureate have a solemn and stately sound. Like certain other titles and names of ceremonies, they seem to bind the older world and the world of our own time more closely together and to bind them in a way that gives added meaning to both. In the days of ancient Greece, poets were often crowned with ivy at the great games amid the acclamations of mighty hosts. With the same gladness of victory in his heart, the Italian Petrarch must once have journeyed to Rome to receive the laurel wreath bestowed on him in praise of poetry. And to the Druids, who in their groves of sacred oak filled for the wild tribes of Briton and of Gaul the threefold office of prophet, priest, and poet, there belonged a feeling of mystery and awe.

The modern poet laureate, though he wins no crown of ivy, oak, or laurel, has yet a place of power and a dignity all his own. Chosen to be the voice of his people in their hours of keenest joy and deepest sorrow, he holds, while his life lasts,



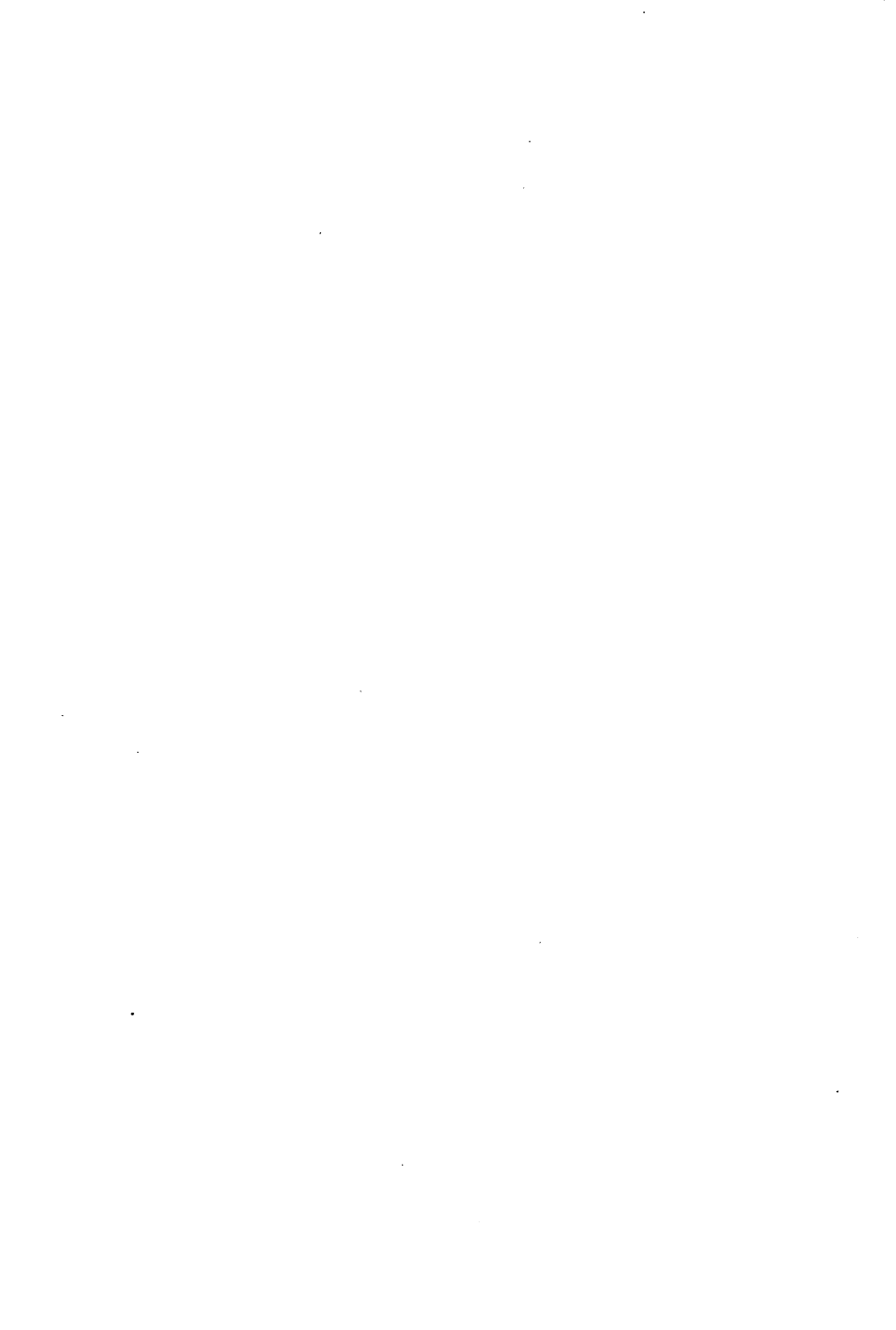
honors that are the gift of a nation. The list of the poets laureate of England shows more than one great name, for Spenser, Dryden, and Wordsworth are to be counted among the holders of that office, but never have its honors been worn with more of the grace and beauty of earlier times than when the laureate was Alfred Tennyson.

Men and women in all walks of life have always realized that it is a great advantage to look one's part. All tellers of romantic tales as well as writers of graver literature are well aware of this fact. One has only to imagine a Rosalind not "more than common tall" and quite unable to wear a doublet and hose becomingly, or a Falstaff suddenly shrunken in girth, to understand how distressing the contrary state of things might be. There seems good reason to believe that the grave beauty of the Van Dyck portraits of King Charles the First has done much to make the Stuart cause romantic, and the artists of the greatest age of Greece could have spared no pains to give their statues of the deities a dignity that should make it clear to all beholders that they represented beings of more than mortal might.

One of the noblest of the recent monuments erected in England is the statue of Tennyson which



Alfred Tennyson  
From the portrait by G. F. Watts, R. A



stands before Lincoln Cathedral, the greatest of the churches in the shire in which the poet was born. Tennyson is represented as an old man, patriarchal in his height and dignity, and impressive in his loose ample cloak, the picturesque garment that always became him so well. He holds in his hand a tiny flower, which he is studying intently. It is a flower known wherever Tennyson's poetry is read, for it is the "flower in the crannied wall" that the great poet, who was also a great thinker, believed might help to explain the universe if it could be understood aright. At his side on the high pedestal stands a tall Russian hound, once his favorite companion in the long walks that he loved to take, with every sense alert for the happy murmur of a hurrying brook, the quick flutter of a bird's wing, or the look of the well-loved landscape as it changed with the passing hours.

The maker of the beautiful memorial statue was George Frederick Watts, one of Tennyson's oldest friends and famous as the painter of "Sir Galahad," the picture that so well sets forth a poet's ideal of the seeker of the Holy Grail. But to all his friends, of whatever age and rank in life, Tennyson always seemed the embodiment of poetic strength and beauty. The crusty Scotch philosopher,

Thomas Carlyle, whose words of praise for living men were usually few and far between, found Tennyson one of the finest-looking men in the world. "A Son of Earth and Son of Heaven," he called him in genuine admiration, for once freely given. And it is recorded that when Tennyson in his early Cambridge days shyly entered the great dining-hall of Trinity College, an onlooker who himself rose to be a man of mark in that famous seat of learning exclaimed with conviction: "That man must be a poet."

The man whom the Muses had so unmistakably marked for their own was fortunate in finding many things in his childhood to guide him to his true vocation and happiness, and fortunate too in the time and place of his birth. The year 1809 was, it would seem, destined to be a year of good omen for the world, for in that year were born Mendelssohn, Darwin, Abraham Lincoln, and Alfred Tennyson, all of them men with power to mold the beauty and knowledge that the past had given into new forms to guide and ennoble the future. A rambling, white-walled house, the rectory of the tiny village of Somersby in Lincolnshire, was the birthplace of the English poet of that goodly company.

In that quiet corner of the world, so far out of the beaten track of commerce and of travel that, even when the poet had grown to be a young man, the mails reached it only once or twice a week, the seven sons and four daughters of the Reverend



SOMERSBY RECTORY, TENNYSON'S BIRTHPLACE

George Tennyson grew up, filling the old house to overflowing and gaining for themselves kindly friends and well-wishers all through the countryside. Alfred was the third child of the family, his brother Charles, always his devoted companion, being one year older, and Frederick, the oldest of them all, his senior by two years.

The father was a man of strong, imperious char-

acter, with a voice like an organ, and a tall, handsome figure and dark complexion that made him seem like a foreigner to his parishioners, themselves the blond descendants of the Danes who centuries ago settled in eastern England. "Th' owd Doctor," as they called him in their broad Lincolnshire dialect, had indeed been hardly treated by fate, which was perhaps one reason why he had in his nature a vein of sadness that seemed to his humbler neighbors to suit his dark looks well enough. Born the eldest son of a wealthy landowner and member of Parliament, he had through no fault of his own been disinherited in favor of a younger brother. The uneventful career of a country clergyman with the care of the three small parishes that the family friends secured for him was not likely to bring great happiness to a proud-spirited man, whose gifts for clever conversation and taste for literature would have better fitted him to play the part to which he was born.

None the less the stern rector, though he had little liking for the duties of the ministry, looked after the people in his parishes in a fashion of his own, and they in turn respected him and found his sermons "over good and over short." A shrewd set of people with keen insight into human nature,

they liked the Tennyson children for their warm hearts and the simple, friendly manners that always belonged to them, while they realized that "th' owd Doctor was all for book-larning" and sure to bring his sons up with the same mysterious tastes.

The book-learning that the rector gave his boys when they began to grow up meant hard and serious work for him as well as for them. He once wrote to a neighbor in those days that he was "suffocated with Latin and Greek." Yet he found time besides to amuse himself by writing poetry, which he did with much ease and vigor, and by indulging his taste for architecture. The beautiful Gothic dining-room with carved arches and pointed stained-glass windows which still forms one end of the Somersby rectory was the result of Dr. Tennyson's energy and talent as a builder. The fireplace with carved pinnacles of plaster which forms its chief ornament was designed by the rector and made by him with the help of his clever man-of-all-work, whose tongue was sometimes as sharp as his tools; but much of the other decorative stonework Doctor Tennyson is said to have done with his own hands, carving "them Hadams and Heves over the windows," as the country people used to explain. But



what the Tennyson children liked best in their stately dining-room were the orange and violet patterns in the stained glass that cast what one of them called "butterfly souls" on the walls.

It was the poet's mother to whom he and the other children chiefly turned for sympathy in their daily joys and sorrows. As "the kindest of bodies to poor folks," she was remembered long after the Tennysons had left Somersby for a home in the south of England, and her tender sympathy for animals was so well known that ill-intentioned people of the neighborhood used to bring their dogs under her windows to beat them, knowing that she would give them money to leave off. Her son Charles, who in later life was called Charles Tennyson Turner, once said of his mother: "Ah! All there is good and kind in any of us came from her tender heart." None the less, Mrs. Tennyson must have had, besides, a demure sense of her proper value in life, for as an old lady, on hearing one of her daughters tell a friend that their mother had had twenty-four offers of marriage, she unexpectedly corrected her with the placid remark, "Twenty-five, my dear!"

Lovers of the poetry of Wordsworth sometimes refer to the beautiful region of hill and lake coun-

try made famous by his poems as Wordsworthshire. With almost as good reason one might think of Lincolnshire as Tennyson's county, for within its wide borders he began in his earliest childhood to study with eager interest the open page of nature—always a wonder-book to him. The traveler, whirled through Lincolnshire in a swiftly-moving train, gets an impression of a quiet, level landscape colored in soft grayish greens, with fringes of tall elm-trees showing here and there against a wind-swept sky. But far away to the east there is a long line of seacoast where the gray waves of the North Sea spread themselves slowly over the endless reaches of sand as the tide comes in. A ridge of rough hillocks whose soil is bound together by coarse, tufted grasses is the barrier that nature long ago began to set against the threatening waves. The Romans, never slow to learn from any teacher, built firm walls, which have since been strengthened many times, to aid in keeping the watery foe at bay, and so there is now little danger of a wild flood of waters such as Jean Ingelow describes in the famous poem, "High Tide on the Coast of Lincolnshire."

Behind the sand dunes lies what Lincolnshire people call "the marsh," a green belt of grass land

several miles in width, its fields separated by broad ditches filled with water, instead of fences—which no doubt gave the region its ancient name, “the parts of Holland.” And farther inland again is the flat fen country, rich and fertile as any farmer’s heart could desire, and therefore in older times much loved by all founders of monasteries who had it in mind to make the good brethren of their community thrifty in worldly gear as well as dutiful in prayer and praise. But it is to the wolds, as the low green hills behind the fen and marsh country are called, that the scenery of Lincolnshire owes much of its charm, and on the “ridged wold” that lies near Somersby are the four square-towered village churches whose bells the poet in his boyhood used to hear answering one another on Christmas Day.

Over marsh and fen and wold, the sea-winds sweep at times with mighty force, bringing, as wild winds often do, a sudden quickening of the blood and stirring of the thoughts when the boughs crash together in the lofty tree-tops. But to a little boy growing up in the Somersby rectory in the early years of the nineteenth century they brought one day a greater gift—no less a marvel than his first line of poetry. The little lad, who was then about

five years old, felt a strange delight in the roaring of the gale and, as he waved his arms in the garden to keep time to its blasts, he chanted as loudly as he could, "I hear a voice that's speaking in the wind." The story of his first line of poetry, like the story of his first poem, which was written when he was only a little older, was told by Tennyson himself years after to the daughter of Thackeray, who was one of his oldest friends. Without her records of the poet's memories of his childhood we should not understand so well the beginnings of his poetry, or his early love for the beauty that lay all about him. As years went by, Alfred Tennyson's ear became more and more sensitive to the voices of nature, as every true poet's must, but it may well be that his wonderful gift for musical words and phrases in poetry had its beginning in his joy at the mighty melodies made by the wind in the trees of the old rectory garden.

He writes in one of his early poems of the friendly trees as—

"The seven elms, the poplars four,  
That stand before my father's door."

And in the same poem he describes—

“The brook that loves  
To purl o’er matted cress and ribbed sand  
Or dimple in the dark of rushy coves.”

The brook at Somersby is not thought to be the famous brook of Tennyson’s later poem, but it is a brook whose shining beauty he loved greatly in his early childhood. To the right of the rectory garden was another well-loved spot, a little orchard where Alfred as a boy used to watch with delight the mellow coloring of the apples as they lay like great golden globes on the grass. The rectory garden was bright, too, with the old-fashioned English flowers for which Lincolnshire is celebrated—hollyhocks and tiger-lilies, sunflowers and rose-carnations—while in the woods just beyond were shady paths, cool beds of fern, and mossy springs of whose beauty he never tired. Of a truth beauty does lie in the eye of the beholder, for this quiet Lincolnshire that molded the nature of one of England’s greatest poets, and gave him the landscape pictures that are the glory of much of his noblest work, is the same Lincolnshire that “bluff Harry,” as King Henry VIII is called in one of Tennyson’s poems, regarded as the region “the most brute and beestilie of the whole realm.”

Once they were old enough to explore the neighborhood, the Tennyson boys found in the quaint parish churches and more imposing manor-houses of the region many a bit of ancient carving and architecture to arouse their curiosity and interest. In Harrington Church, only two miles from the Somersby rectory, there was as fine an effigy of a stern crusader as boys could wish to see. Clad in knightly hood of mail he lay, looking scorn at all enemies of his faith, though his blunted spurs and broken sword might seem to hint that the days of chivalrous fighting were far in the past. And there was in the same neighborhood more than one fine old mansion with paneled walls, oaken staircases, and gloomy avenues of trees leading past little lakes so dark that their depths could only be guessed. At Harrington Hall, one of the most interesting of these houses, their father's sons were always welcome. There they must often have studied the carved pieces of paneling and curious tapestries in which fools in motley, griffins, and other strange monsters disported themselves in most delightful and romantic confusion. And there was, too, at Harrington Hall, a small walled flower-garden dating from Elizabethan times, and a high-terraced walk for ladies, where the rooks loved to gather

at twilight calling hoarsely to one another just as they do in the poem called "Maud" which Tennyson wrote many years after.

Alfred must have "commenced poet," as people used to say in older times, when he was little more than seven years old. One Sunday morning, when the small boy was for some reason to stay away from church, his brother Charles put a slate into his hand, telling him to write a poem about the flowers in the garden. Nothing loath, the younger child covered both sides of the slate with verses in the meter of Thomson's "Seasons," the only poetry then known to him, and anxiously awaited the return of his critic. To his great joy and satisfaction, the slate was handed gravely back to him with the favorable verdict: "Yes, you can write."

The young poet's next task was a more difficult one and his next critic less respectful. At the death of Alfred's grandmother, from whom he was thought to have inherited his early delight in versifying, his grandfather desired him to write a poem about her, which he obediently did. Whereupon the old gentleman, whose tastes were much more practical than literary, handed him a half-guinea, a very large sum for a small boy to possess in those

days, with the remark: "Here is half a guinea for you, the first you have ever earned by poetry, and take my word for it, it will be the last." The disapproving grandfather little dreamed that the much-despised poet would one day earn enough money from a single poem, his famous "Maud," to buy the beautiful home on the Isle of Wight which was his delight for many years. Had the old gentleman had his way, there would have been no poets in the Tennyson family.

Alfred's eighth year of life was to be a year of memorable experiences, for before it had ended he was sent with his brother Charles to a school at Louth, a quaint old town across the wolds, not very far distant from Somersby. There is a story that Alfred had been solemnly asked whether he would prefer to go to sea or to school, and, thinking that school sounded like a sort of paradise, had promptly answered, "To school." The eager little pupil must have often regretted the sad lack of knowledge that led to his choice. He hated the school while he was there, and long afterwards, with bitter hatred, and for many years after he had left it, could not bear to pass the spot where he had been so unhappy.

Like many other schools of the same name, the



King Edward the Sixth Grammar School at Louth had been founded in the reign of the studious boy-king whose statue still stands on a part of the old building. Unfortunately for the Tennyson children, the daily lessons of the school had also remained much as they used to be in the days of the founder. A small boy whose school-books were an Ovid, a Greek exercise-book, and a Latin grammar written by Erasmus and Colet, the great leaders of the Renaissance, might well be despondent now and then, one might imagine. And to make matters worse, the headmaster of those days was bent on conducting the education of his charges much in the spirit suggested by the school seal, which represents a boy being whipped and bears the Latin motto: *Qui parcit virgam odit filium*, "Whoever spares the rod spoils the child."

But the evil of unrestrained bullying on the part of the older boys was to the Tennyson children the cause of the most painful of all their school experiences. Alfred is said to have remembered to the end of his long life how unhappy he was one cold winter morning as he sat on the schoolhouse steps, crying bitterly because an older schoolfellow had cuffed his head for the crime of being that most forlorn of all creatures, a new boy. Yet with all

its faults, the Louth school was in no way different from the other schools for well-to-do boys that flourished throughout England in those days, supported largely by ancient gifts and endowments, but governed with small regard to the well-being of their pupils. Happily, while the endowments still remain, a gentler and kindlier spirit rules to-day within the gray walls of even the oldest of the English public schools.

The lot of Charles and Alfred Tennyson had in one respect been happier than that of their school-fellows, for they lived while at Louth with their grandmother, Mrs. Tennyson's mother, in a house which is now called the Tennyson House, in their honor. But in spite of much kindness in the daily home life and frequent visits from their parents, both boys were in a state of eager joy when they learned that they were to leave school and continue their studies at home with their father. The happy change came when Alfred was eleven years old, in the year of the proclamation of the coronation of King George IV. For once the boys had a happy memory of their school-days to carry away with them, for, decked with blue ribbon badges, they walked with their companions in a procession to celebrate the event, making, as all the old wives

in the town agreed, the prettiest part of the show.

The Louth of to-day, though it boasts of a fine old church whose tall spire is one of the sights of Lincolnshire, and some other ancient bits of architecture, has few spots more interesting to the American visitor than the schoolroom of the King Edward the Sixth Grammar School, which has at one end a white marble bust of Tennyson and, facing it, a bronze bust of Captain John Smith, who, strange as it may seem, was once a pupil there. Another bit of Lincolnshire that belongs to the early pages of American history is the ancient town of Boston, built near the sea, in the midst of the marsh and fen country from which farmers in very early times began to carry their stock of wool and leather to be sold at the nearest town. So it came to pass that by the fifteenth century Boston had no fewer than fifteen guilds or associations of thriving merchants. They were men of substance but of wisdom too, since they gave gladly of their wealth to aid the struggling Puritan colony across the Atlantic, which in gratitude called its capital Boston, after the picturesque town in the Lincolnshire fens. The name Boston, it is interesting to know, is a corruption of the words "St. Botolph's Town," St. Botolph being an English monk in whose honor was built the great

church with the wonderful square tower and belfry that is known in the homely language of the countryside as Boston Stump.

But neither the hard adventures of English colonists who left their much-loved homes for the sake of faith and freedom, nor the Napoleonic wars that were raging during their childhood, seem to have been in the minds of the handsome children at the Somersby rectory when they invented their own games. It is from the records of Thackeray's daughter again that we learn of the favorite sports and pastimes of the Tennyson children in those happy days. They were knights with castles to storm, fair maids to rescue, and mimic tournaments to fight. With the help of the poetic imagination that was never lacking in the Tennyson family a tall white stick fastened in the ground served admirably for a king, and a circle of shorter, thicker sticks for his " throngs of knights and barons bold "; a stone heap made a mountain fastness, and a ruined tree trunk a haunted dwelling to be approached with bated breath. And when the outdoor games came to an end, it was Alfred that was always the chosen minstrel of the younger children who listened with breathless interest on winter evenings to his fascinating tales of

the days of chivalry or to legends about the homely witches and fairies once known to the countryside. As one reads of those childish games and fireside stories, it seems clear enough that the real beginnings of the poet's famous "Idylls of the King" were made long before he had met Arthur and Guinevere, Lancelot and the rest, in the pages of the medieval "Morte d'Arthur," that noble treasure-house of knightly and romantic tales. There were "horns of elf-land faintly blowing" over the Lincolnshire wolds in the early years of the nineteenth century, we may be sure, and it may well be that the city of the ideal—

" Built

To music, therefore never built at all  
And therefore built forever,"

was already part of the young poet's dream, although he had not yet come to know that its name would be Camelot.

Another favorite amusement with the Tennyson children was the writing of endless romances which were put, a chapter at a time, under the vegetable dishes at dinner and read in council when the more serious business of the meal was concluded. Here, too, Alfred was the recognized leader of the little

group, one tale of his, called "The Old Horse," being regarded as a masterpiece, and lasting for months. And like all imaginative children, the brothers and sisters sometimes acted plays for their own amusement, and on such occasions it was Alfred who won the most notice from the elders of the family for the dramatic rendering of his parts and his musical utterance, "the voice like a pine wood," as one of his friends of later years used to say. He was especially successful in the part of Malvolio in "Twelfth Night," and showed in general so much intelligence in acting that his parents used to wonder if he might not one day be destined to become an actor in good earnest.

Meanwhile the Malvolio of the rectory garden was busily practising another accomplishment, and wisely, for letter-writing among friends was by no means a neglected art in the early half of the last century. The earliest of Tennyson's letters now in existence is a most remarkable document, addressed when he was twelve years old to his aunt, who lived at Louth. Taking her sympathy with his reading for granted, the young writer proceeds to tell her of his delight in Milton's drama, "Samson Agonistes," quoting, to refresh her memory, the passages that have most impressed him, and show-

ing by his comments and references to Byron, Horace, and Dante that, boy as he is, poetry is the thing in the world that means most to him. Boy-like, he crowds the family news into a postscript whose phrases, however, show him to be by no means so lacking in a sense of humor as might have been feared from the great display of learning in the earlier part of the letter.

The line in the Miltonic drama that seemed to the twelve-year-old lover of poetry the most beautiful of all occurs in Samson's lament for his blindness:

"O dark, dark, dark, amid the blaze of noon."

The young student was himself to become a poet with a love for the sound of broad, open vowels in the word-music that he made, and it is interesting to see how early he found his way to admire them in the work of a great master. It sometimes happens, however, that poets, like other worthy people, are misunderstood, even where they are most loved, and there is a story that Alfred's habit of murmuring melodious phrases under his breath for the pure pleasure of hearing them became a source of real anxiety to the rectory cook, who finally demanded

energetically in her broad Lincolnshire, "And what is Master Awlfred always a-praying for?"

But for the most part, Master Alfred and his brothers went their way as secure in the good-will of their humbler neighbors as of the schoolfellow at Louth who wrote of Charles and Alfred Tennyson as "tall likely lads who could have done anything they liked with bat and ball, but they were other-minded and games had no interest for them. They were always together—such brothers as never were—generous and warm-hearted and never forgot old friends." The Tennysons never cared for fine clothes, though Alfred had a way of looking picturesque in whatever garb he wore. He was always a great reader and usually carried a book in his hand if he walked alone, reading as he went and quite unconscious of what might be going on about him. One of the younger brothers used to remember how the Louth mail-coach coming up behind Alfred one day as he paced the snow-covered roads, book in hand, made him start when, the coachman's loud "Ho! Ho!" having failed to rouse him, he found a horse's nose and eyes poking over his shoulder as if also desirous of knowledge.

It was to the same younger brother that Alfred once said emphatically, as they were talking over



their future plans during a long ramble, "Well, Arthur, I mean to be famous." If fame is a plant that grows in the soil of earnest work and happy effort the boy had reason for his hopes, for between the ages of twelve and fourteen he had by his own account written "an epic of six thousand lines à la Walter Scott—full of battles, dealing too with sea and mountain scenery," as well as a drama in blank verse which he pronounced "not bad—some of it" when he read it many years later. His best-beloved hero in those early days of poetic effort was Byron, and Byron's death, which occurred when Alfred Tennyson was fourteen, seemed to the boy to darken everything in an instant. "I thought the whole world was at an end," he wrote long afterwards, speaking of that sad event. He remembered, too, stealing away in his sorrow to carve the words, "Byron is dead," on a sandstone rock near a secluded spring that was one of his favorite haunts.

All the while lessons went on in Dr. Tennyson's study with vigor, if not always with zest. Frederick, the oldest son of the family, who had held the proud title of captain of the school at Eton, was already at Cambridge, where Charles and Alfred were to follow him as soon as they had acquired some knowledge of history, science, and

mathematics, besides the necessary Greek and Latin. Even in those early days it seemed to Alfred a dreadful thing that the poems of Horace should be used as daily task-work, and the same feeling made him at the height of his own fame utter the pitiful lament: "They will use me as a lesson-book and they will call me 'that horrible Tennyson.'" But, at most, only half of the doleful prophecy has been fulfilled, for though Tennyson is studied in schools and colleges, through the spells of wise Merlin or his own magic art he has escaped the doom that he most feared.

In the poetical efforts of his sons, Dr. Tennyson appears to have taken little interest, in spite of his own skill in versifying. But the gentle and beautiful mother of the family was never so happy as when she was being drawn along the quiet lanes in a donkey-chair with her handsome sons at her side, their thoughts all of the poems that they were writing and hers all of them. By the time Alfred was seventeen and Charles a year older, the brothers were looking forward eagerly to that greatest of all events in a young writer's career—the joy of first seeing himself in print. A bookseller at Louth had agreed to bring out a joint volume of their poetry and to pay them twenty pounds for it, making,

however, the prudent proviso that half the payment was to be taken in books from his shop. It would have taken sterner measures to cloud the happiness of the eager pair. Volumes of poetry were no novelties to them in after life, but they always remembered waiting with their mother in great excitement for the arrival of the carrier's cart that was to bring the precious unbound sheets of print for their anxious inspection. And when the finished volume finally appeared, the boys were carried out of themselves with joy. Recklessly hiring a carriage with part of their newly-gotten gains, they drove across wolds and marshes to their favorite spot on the shore, where they roared out their poems in each other's ears in the comfortable certainty that the waves and seagulls would think no worse of them for their riotous delight.

"Poems by Two Brothers" is the title of the little volume that was the cause of so much vigorous rejoicing at Somersby in the year 1827. It has been reprinted since those days, and readers in libraries sometimes turn its pages thoughtfully, as one might scan a great artist's earliest sketch-book to find here and there a hint of the coming master. The verses are often said to show more traces of the influence of Byron than of any other writer, but

at every turn one finds the newest aspirants to fame advancing under the banner of some great leader in their chosen art. From Horace and Vergil, from Milton, Pope, Cowper, Gray, and Scott, as well as from Byron, lines are freely borrowed to serve as mottoes for the poems, or, as it might seem, to set the keynote, lest the ear of a youthful poet should play him false. The poems signed "A. T." form about half the volume. Faults indeed they have, as many a wise and learned critic has pointed out, but even to readers who are not great critics it is plain enough that the young writer has the power to make nature pictures as dainty as miniatures, to suggest magical landscapes for the backgrounds of stories, and to weave rhythmic words and phrases together in a new kind of word-music.

The poems signed "C. T." have their own share of the good gifts of the Muses, and to the reader of to-day the youthful venture seems to have been not ill-advised. But the motto chosen for the title-page, as well as the brief preface that follows, shows that the brother-poets feared for the little bark that they were about to launch on the wide sea of literature, even while they rejoiced at its existence. The last sentence of the preface reads: "We have passed the Rubicon and we leave the rest to fate,

though its verdict may create a fruitless regret that we ever emerged from 'the shade' and courted notoriety." The motto on the title-page is the line, *Haec nos novimus esse nihil*, from the Latin poet Martial. "We know these poems to be of little



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worth" is a frank confession of youthful modesty, but to those who have ears to hear it sounds a better omen for the future than would many a bolder utterance.

Not long after their first essay as authorship, Charles and Alfred Tennyson found themselves established as students at Trinity College, Cam-

bridge, where their older brother had already begun to be known as a winner of university prizes and a writer of clever verse. The younger brothers were shy and reserved, but Alfred's magnificent presence at once attracted attention, and soon many of the abler and more thoughtful students at the "poets' college," as Cambridge has come to be called, realized that the new poet who had come among them was worthy of all high regard and friendship. Even the stern tutor who fell to the lot of the younger Tennysons had a way of overlooking failings in Alfred that would have caused him to pour forth his wrath had the culprit been any ordinary student. "Mr. Tennyson, what is the compound interest of a penny put out at the Christian era up to the present time?" is said to have been his usual method of intimating that Mr. Tennyson was quietly reading Vergil during a lecture instead of following his tutor's explanation with due seriousness.

His father's illness caused Tennyson to leave college without taking his degree, but none the less the years spent at the University brought him much that was of value. Of formal studies, the classics, history, and natural science were his favorite subjects both at Cambridge and in after life. In

politics he showed an interest, at once generous and keen, and could always in his student days be counted on to cast the weight of his opinion on the side that leaned to greater freedom for men and for ideas. The agitation that ended by abolishing slavery in the British Empire, and the movement to sweep aside the religious tests for entrance to Oxford and Cambridge, had in particular his warmest interest and sympathy. Once, indeed, he was so carried away by his enthusiasm for liberty that he joined a company of Spanish patriots who had raised the standard of revolt against what they felt to be high-handed tyranny, but for the most part Tennyson held to the quieter paths that lead to progress, often praising his native country as the land—

“Where freedom slowly broadens down  
From precedent to precedent.”

And if in later years he was not counted in the ranks of

“Poets who sing of what the world will be  
When the years have died away,”

it was mainly because his studies of history and science had taught him that all true gains come

but slowly, and not because of any lack of sympathy with those who are at odds with the world.

Tennyson had had as his companion in his romantic expedition to Spain Arthur Hallam, the best-beloved of his fellow-students, and a young man of rare qualities of mind and character. How much Hallam's friendship meant to the poet, Tennyson's readers know from "In Memoriam," the famous poem in which Hallam's early death is mourned. Once before he and Hallam had been brothers-in-arms in a friendly contest, for both had competed at Cambridge for the University prize for English verse in a year when the theme was *Timbuctoo*. The desert-city of Timbuctoo appears to have been thought of in those days as a sort of African El Dorado, far different from the dusty, crowded caravan center known to travelers to-day, and therefore in the eyes of the University authorities a fit subject for poetry. Such, indeed, Tennyson found it, or perhaps it might be truer to say made it, for the Timbuctoo of his poem is a dream-city, fair

"As those which starred the night of the older world."

"A crystal pile" crowned with "rampart upon rampart, dome on dome," it is revealed to the won-



dering "child of man," as the poet calls himself, by a bright seraph, who at the moment of the vision's greatest beauty foretells the destruction of this "latest throne" of story and fable by the swift advance of the spirit of "keen discovery." Small wonder if the judges were at a loss, for the meter of the poem was as surprising as the rest. Rhymed heroic couplets were in those days thought the only proper form for undergraduate prize poems, and Tennyson had boldly written in blank verse! But after due deliberation and some shaking of heads, the prize was declared his, greatly to the delight of all his friends, though not a little to their wonder, too. That Tennyson should wish to escape declaiming his prize poem in the Senate House, as law and custom required, was, however, not at all surprising to his friends, and one of them who understood his dislike for all that savored of show finally agreed to read the poem in order to spare him that trying ordeal.

The poet's next university honors, which came to him when Oxford conferred an honorary degree upon him more than twenty years later, were not allowed to pass with so little public notice. The undergraduates, who feel it their privilege to save such ceremonies from dignified dullness, were present

to do honor of the day and—alas for Tennyson and his dignity!—no sooner was his name pronounced than there sounded from the gallery plaintive voices, inquiring: “And did your mother wake and call you early, call you early, Alfred



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dear?” in humorous imitation of the accents of the poet’s own “May Queen.” Tennyson’s modesty was, however, like his simplicity of character, a very real part of his nature. He is often said to have been like the poet Vergil in his love of the country, with its space for quiet thoughts and pleasures, as well in his impatience of the show and glitter of the life of cities. Both the Latin and the

English poets kept in their prime of manhood a certain rustic grandeur of speech and manner, yet both were held in high esteem at palaces and courts. To Tennyson, indeed, the prospect of a title and a peerage was altogether distasteful until it was made clear to him that in doing him honor his country was doing honor to the calling of literature. He showed the same spirit of manly modesty and independence on one occasion when Queen Victoria had asked if she could do the poet laureate any service. The prompt answer, "Nothing, your Majesty, but to shake my two boys by the hand," was a characteristic reply.

And in the homely dialect poems in which he set forth with loving care the sturdy strength and shrewd humor of the friendly neighbors of his boyhood Tennyson gave another proof of his liking for the simple things of life. To hear "Linkishire," as its people call it, was a delight to him to the very end of his life, and to put its quaint words and phrases into poetry a task in which he took heart-felt pleasure. As an elderly man, he was greatly delighted by a letter from the son of a Somersby bricklayer who had settled in Missouri, but had kept it for his proudest boast that he was "the same age as Halfred." "Oh, sir," wrote the sturdy

admirer of Tennyson's Lincolnshire poems, "perhaps no man in America knows as well as I where you first heard wrens twitter and the blackbirds and robins and thrushes sing." But for all their admiration for Mr. Alfred and his poetry, the Lincolnshire folk were never willing to lose their hold on plain facts. There is a story that an old woman in a marsh cottage to whom a friendly visitor was reading "Locksley Hall" suddenly interrupted at the line,

"Here about the beach I wandered, nourishing a youth sublime,"

with the earnest protest: "Now, miss, doan't you believe a word of that, for there's nothing to nourish nobody here."

"The Northern Farmer" and Tennyson's other dialect poems were all the more remarkable because he had been for many a year away from the sights and sounds of Lincolnshire when they were written. The first group of poems published over his own name had appeared while he was still at Cambridge and, not unnaturally perhaps, found little welcome except from his loyal college friends. His next effort, the volume containing "The Lady of Shalott," "The Palace of Art," "A Dream of Fair

Women," "Ænone," and "The Lotus-Eaters," poems that show the growth of the poet's mind and art, was published soon after he had left his university friends to take up the old life at Somersby.

The list of the poems that were to come from his pen in the future is a long one. To many of his readers Tennyson's work seems like a noble bridge with beautiful arches that span the river of the passing years and carry the traveler in safety at last to the farther shore. Near the beginning of the mighty structure shines the flashing beauty of "The Lady of Shalott." Its central massive pier is "In Memoriam," the poet's greatest song of sorrow and of love, while at the farther end there gleams the mystic light of "Crossing the Bar." Both art and life were to Tennyson a journey toward ever-growing light, for always, like his own wise Merlin, he held it his highest duty to "Follow the Gleam."

## CHARLOTTE BRONTË

"ASK where's the North? At York, 'tis on the Tweed," once wrote an English poet. But to most of the poet's countrymen "the North" means Yorkshire itself, a region of high bleak moorland, of rounded hills and noisy, hurrying brooks. The traveler through that county, the largest in all England, sees few of the green fields separated by hedgerows of darker green, the ancient oaks and elms, the rose-covered cottages and bright gardens that make the quiet beauty of southern England.

Yet Yorkshire has a beauty all its own. It is sterner than that of the pleasant smiling South, for it is the work not of man but of nature, and it is simpler, since the colors in its landscape are few and strong. There is gray on the bare tops of the hills and gray in the low walls that take the place of hedges between the fields, and gray in the square strong stones of which the tiniest cottages and tallest factories are alike built. But the sturdy grass and determined little trees that struggle with all their might to climb the steep hillside are very green, and

there are the brightest hues of pink and of purple in the heather that clothes the moors in summer like a royal mantle.

In the part of Yorkshire called the West Riding, which is the ancient name for the western third of the county, is the village of Haworth, built along both sides of a stony road which leads up a long, steep hillside. The very topmost house of the village is Haworth rectory. In it, less than a century ago, lived six small children, the son and the five daughters of the Reverend Patrick Brontë. One of the little girls was one day to be the author of "Jane Eyre" and a famous Englishwoman of her time. The other children were clever and thoughtful, too, and, young as they were, they all loved the wild, lonely moors better than any grown-up person has ever done, except perhaps the great Sir Walter Scott. He, indeed, loved them like a true son of the North, and used to say that he could never live without seeing the bonny heather once a year.

The children of the Brontë family were never well or happy away from the sight of their beloved moors. Once the garden gate of the rectory had shut behind them they were out on the main road and free to wander past the church down to the village, or to turn their faces to the moors. The

village had seldom any charms for them. Hand in hand, the older children carefully helping the younger ones toddling beside them, they faced the wind-swept uplands that rose behind their home. There they found in the lonely grandeur of the scene a kind of happiness that well-kept gardens



HAWORTH RECTORY

and blooming flower-beds can never give, and, strange as it may seem, it was a happiness of which they never tired.

Like most Yorkshire dwellings of its day, the old rectory was built for strength and not for beauty. It is an oblong two-story house of dull gray stone with a dark slate roof, heavy and strong enough to



withstand the furious storms that sweep down upon the village in the wild winters. The interior of the house is as plain as its four straight walls. A stout front door opens on a stone-paved hall which had Mr. Brontë's study to the right and the family sitting-room to the left. Behind is the kitchen, and upstairs are four square bedrooms and a tiny room over the hall, of which the children were very fond and in which they used to amuse themselves for hours at a time in a clever fashion of their own. From the very beginning of the Brontës' life at Haworth, the cramped little room was known as "the children's study." They would have despised the nurseries where most English children spend happy hours with childish toys to amuse them.

The children's father, the Reverend Patrick Brontë, was no more English than his name. Born in a little village in Ireland, the eldest of ten children, he showed his native spirit and energy by fitting himself to be the village schoolmaster at the age of sixteen. His father had intended him to be a hand-loom weaver, and weave he did, though with a book propped up before him on the frame of the loom. Steadfastly continuing, however, to learn and to teach, he finally made his way to the University of Cambridge through the help of some



**Charlotte Brontë**



friends, and having finished his studies there and taken his degree, was made a clergyman of the Church of England, much to the pride and satisfaction of the relatives that he had left behind him in County Down.

The tall, handsome young man was a good son, too, and sent his mother part of the money that he won as prizes at college and remembered her kindly as long as she lived. But his ways were not the ways of his kindred in Ireland, and when he finally chose a wife, she was very different from the people among whom he had grown up. Miss Maria Branwell, the lady whom he married, came from the village of Penzance, in the part of southern England that has fewer storms in winter and earlier flowers in spring than any of the other counties. She was small and delicate, with a love for beautiful things and dainty ways. But she had also a strong sense of duty and much firmness of character, and though life in the cold north must often have seemed hard enough to the gentle lady, she was never known to regret the soft balmy winds and sunny climate of the southern home that she was never to see again.

Fortunately for the children, they were too young to realize their loss when their mother died

soon after the family had come to live in the rectory at Haworth. Anne, the youngest of them all, was indeed only a year old at the time, far too little to remember the village of Thornton where they had lived just before, or her two older sisters who died not very long after their mother. Little Anne, as well as Emily, who was a year older, and Patrick Branwell, the boy of the family, could, in after years, hardly have remembered the time when Charlotte was not a sort of mother to them, so quietly and earnestly did she settle down to the cares and duties of older sister of the family.

It seems strange that a little girl of nine should have been able to guide and rule her younger brother and sisters so wisely and so well. Charlotte, however, was as clever at understanding the people around her as she was at reading, or at her favorite amusement of "making out," by which the children meant imagining all sorts of interesting adventures for people they had read of. There were many wise and learned volumes in the nine covered carts that toiled up the steep, stony hillside when the Brontës came to Haworth, but children's books were not very common in those days and certainly had no place in the Vicar's library. The Brontë children, however, were never easily frightened by

things that were in print, no matter how hard and crabbed the pages might look. They were much more afraid of people, for their quiet life in their out-of-the-way corner of the world had made them shy and retiring. Even when they grew older, they were always happiest when they could be together up in their little study, or in the fire-lit kitchen on winter evenings while the wild winds howled over the lonely moors.

But though the children might well have spent their days happily with no other companions than one another, they were not left altogether to their own devices. Not very long after their mother's death, one of her sisters, Miss Elizabeth Branwell, came from Penzance, in sunny Cornwall, to watch over the bringing-up of her nieces and to order the ways of the household. The poor lady was never very happy in Yorkshire. She often longed for the warmer climate and gayer life of her southern home, and she would have understood her nieces better while they were growing up if they had cared more for pretty frocks and tea-parties and less for reading their father's books and newspapers and talking to one another about them. None the less the good aunt did her duty to the little family in its far northern home and, if her nieces did not

wholly love her, they always held her in great respect and honor.

The stone-paved floors and stone stairs of the lower story of the rectory were always a great trial to Miss Branwell and she soon established herself in her own room upstairs, where with the aid of her japanned work-box, her inlaid writing-case, and the other little belongings dear to her heart she sometimes managed to forget the miles of snow-covered moors just outside of her window. Up to their aunt's refuge from cold floors and uncomfortable draughts her nieces came every morning to recite some portions of their daily lessons, and to learn the fine sewing that was considered the most important part of every girl's education in those days.

The good aunt had no notion that girls should be allowed to grow up without a thorough knowledge of housekeeping, even if they were clever enough to find their chief pleasure in talking about poetry and politics. And so, like a general who directs a battle from a height, field-glass in hand, she issued her orders and carefully laid her plans for the daily sweepings, dusting, and bed-making. Her pupils did her credit, for long before they were grown up they could perform all such tasks to Miss

Branwell's entire satisfaction, which meant that they were no more to be despised as housekeepers than as clever talkers and writers.

Downstairs in the kitchen, a warm-hearted Yorkshire woman, whose name the children quickly shortened from Tabitha to Tabby, reigned supreme. She ruled them all, even Charlotte, with a rod of iron, but would let no one else interfere with her "bairns," whom she loved devotedly to the very end of her long life. Many a cake was baked for them in the tidy kitchen on snowy afternoons, and many a cozy hour did they spend there when Tabby was minded to have them about. But to their sorrow, bedtimes were always things to be respected in Tabby's eyes, no matter how interesting a story had to be left half finished. Fond of her charges as she was, she had no wish to let them fail in learning her favorite duty of obedience.

In return the Brontë children always kept a deep and true affection for their faithful friend. When they were away from home in later years, letters to Tabby came as often and were as friendly as even her loving heart could wish. When she was aged and infirm they cared for her themselves, and some of the prettiest stories of Charlotte Brontë's later life are those which tell of her regard for



Tabby's feeling when the faithful servant was still eager in her old age to be useful to the household that she loved.

To keep old Tabby happy and contented in the days when a younger maid had come to help her with her duties was no easy problem. Some things she would do for herself, in spite of failing sight, and the task that Yorkshire calls "pilling potatoes" was always one of them. It was only by stealing down to the kitchen and taking out the specks when Tabby's back was turned that Charlotte Brontë, the much-talked writer of those days, saved Tabby's pride. To have had her young assistant help her with that special duty would have made the faithful old woman sad at heart for many a day.

Old Tabby's growing deafness was even harder to deal with. To be left in ignorance of the family affairs was more than she could bear, while to shout them in her ear meant to tell them to the whole parish. Again the thoughtful kindness of the young woman who had become a great writer solved the problem. Now and then Charlotte would take the faithful old woman for a walk on the moors. There, seated in comfort under a friendly furze-bush out of reach of curious ears, she patiently heard and answered all Tabby's questions. Both

mistress and maid came home well satisfied from those expeditions, we may be sure, Miss Brontë glad to have eased the mind of her faithful friend, and Tabby proud to be again in the confidence of the household that she had served with almost jealous love and faithfulness for so many years.

But all these things were far in the future in the days when the Brontë children were growing up, so happy in their own company and their clever make-believes that they never thought of wishing for other friends or amusements. Branwell, the dearly-loved brother, who was only a year younger than Charlotte, went a little more into the world than his sisters, though he shared their daily interests, too. His special lessons were always recited in his father's study, and he was oftener his father's companion in long walks and in visits to the outlying portions of the large parish of which Mr. Brontë had charge. "The Vicar's Patrick," as the Haworth people called him, was a handsome boy with a clever tongue and merry manners that made him as quick in gaining friends as his sisters were slow and retiring. Charlotte and the younger girls admired their brother greatly and had many a dream of what he was to be and to do. Yet, strangely enough, he was never sent away from

home to make a life of his own at school like other boys in England. And perhaps it was because of the lack of knowing how to hold his own with his equals, at work and at play, that, for all his brilliant talents and his gift for making friends, he brought in the end only sorrow and disappointment to the father and sisters whose hope and pride he had been.

When Branwell grew up he studied portrait-painting for a while, and there is a picture of his sisters, painted when Anne was about seventeen, which gives us some idea of them at that age. Portraits of young children were rare a century ago, except when some friend of the family had a talent for drawing, and we are dependent upon the accounts of their friends for a knowledge of the looks and manners of the little Brontës. Charlotte, we are told, was very small and pale, but had beautiful intelligent brown eyes and a quantity of pretty soft brown hair. Her tones were gentle and her manner rather hesitating except when she was roused, but then she spoke with a clearness and energy that left her hearers in no doubt as to her real feelings.

Emily, who was younger than Branwell, was tall and slender, a lover of the wildest and loneliest spots on the moors and of animals, but silent and reserved except with her sisters and their very

closest friends. As she grew older, a dog called Keeper, who was rough and fierce to all the world but his mistress, was her devoted companion in her lonely walks. Fortunate was the human friend who was invited to take his place. Such invitations were rare indeed and highly esteemed in the family as a mark of Emily's favor.

Anne was the youngest and prettiest of the family, the most like other children, and, it is often said, the least talented and original of the Brontë group. Yet Anne was never known to lag behind the others in work or in play. Through the days of her childhood and the years that followed, she, as well as her sisters, must have been learning to think about the people and the world around her, for when Charlotte and Emily each discovered by accident that the other had written some poems, Anne was able to add her share to the little volume. And again, when each of her sisters was timidly sending a novel out into the world to try its fate, Anne had a story of her own ready to make the same venture.

A great deal of what is most interesting in the books written by the three sisters belongs to the days of their early childhood. Like many other writers, they were happiest in describing the people and things that they had known all their lives. And

Yorkshire is a region where old customs and quaint turns of speech hold their own, in spite of the coming of the tall factories that have blackened the green valleys with ugly smoke and dust. Cloth-weaving is to-day the main industry of the countryside, as it was in the far-away times when hand-looms were first invented. The weavers still speak the broad northern dialect that was always music in the ears of the Brontës, and still clatter up and down the stony hillsides in strong, old-fashioned wooden clogs instead of shoes, the women wearing thick woolen shawls over their heads even in bright summer weather. Once known, they are a people no more to be forgotten than their own impressive scenery. It is small wonder that their strong characters and the vigorous phrases of their daily speech had so much meaning to the clever children in the rectory and filled so large a place in the novels that they were to write in later years.

Nevertheless, it was within the four walls of their own home and in the occupations that they invented for themselves that the group of eager children found their chief interests. As soon as they could read and write the people in books became much more real to them than any others. Time passed all too quickly while they talked of their favorite

heroes and wrote stories of their own to give them new adventures. At six, Charlotte had read "The Pilgrim's Progress" with so much faith and earnestness that, like the hero of that celebrated book, she thought it right to make a pilgrimage of her



STREET LEADING TO HAWORTH CHURCH AND RECTORY

own. But alas! she soon found that all the hills of Yorkshire were hills of difficulty and, at a place where the overhanging trees made the road dark with shadows, the little pilgrim lost her courage and turned back homeward, to her own cruel disappointment, no doubt.

It was not long before the great men whose doings were described in the newspaper that Mr. Brontë walked miles every week to get became al-

most as interesting to the children as their other heroes. In fact, politics sometimes threatened to take the place of poetry in their daily talks. In the days when the people who wished to strengthen the power of the King and the government were called Tories Mr. Brontë was always a strong upholder of that party, and his children, following in his footsteps, were as staunch Tories as could be found in all England when they were hardly more than babies.

Perhaps it was for that reason that Charlotte's favorite hero in real life was the great Duke of Wellington, who was the leader of the Tory party as well as victor over Napoleon at Waterloo. In all the stories that the loyal little girl wrote about the "Iron Duke" he was sure to come out conqueror in the most amazing way. Mr. Brontë remembered long afterwards how he used sometimes to be called up to the children's study to settle excited disputes about the relative greatness of Charlotte's hero and of his brother generals, Hannibal, Cæsar, and Napoleon. The Duke would probably have been greatly amused if he could have had a glimpse of his staunch little partisan, barely out of pinafores but determined to place him first among the warriors of the world.

Charlotte's interest in her favorite hero never left her, it would appear. In a letter written when she was about eighteen to one of her school friends who was enjoying the wonders of a first visit to London she inquires: "Have you yet seen anything of the great personages whom the sitting of Parliament now detains in London?" And the Duke of Wellington is first on the list of persons named. Many years later, when Charlotte Brontë, then known to the world as the author of "Jane Eyre" and "Shirley," was making one of her visits to London, some friends persuaded her to sit for her portrait to the well-known painter, George Richmond. For all his skill, the artist had to own himself baffled for once. The quiet, serious looks of the little Yorkshire lady gave no hint of the fire of feeling of which he knew her to be capable. But suddenly, to his great joy, all was changed, and in a few moments the portrait began to gaze at him from the canvas with the expression that he had longed to see. It was the great Duke who had wrought the magic change, all unknown to himself. The painter had mentioned by accident that her hero had visited the studio a few moments before and at once Charlotte Brontë broke into eager talk about him, and her old enthusiasm shone in her eyes.



With Charlotte as their leader, the Brontë children often invented clever games for themselves, most of which had something to do with their own everyday life as well as with the people they had read about. Sometimes they played that they were islanders, each with a separate island for a domain. Branwell, as became the boy of the family, chose the Isle of Man, and Emily the Isle of Arran, perhaps because it was lonely and far to the north; Anne's island was the beautiful isle of Guernsey in the English Channel and Charlotte's the Isle of Wight. Next they chose interesting people to be dwellers on their islands, and again the difference in their tastes was clearly shown. Branwell's first choice was John Bull, and Emily's, Sir Walter Scott. Charlotte thought, of course, of her favorite hero, the great Duke, while Anne, who was only eight when the game was invented, chose two important political leaders of the day.

Real toys such as most children delight in were always rare in the Haworth rectory. Those that did find their way there were by no means unwelcome to the children, but were likely to be put to strange and remarkable uses before they were many hours old. A set of soldiers that Mr. Brontë, who always felt a strong interest in the military life,

once brought home to Branwell from the neighboring city of Leeds immediately suggested a new game of make-believe. No sooner had the little boy carried his wooden warriors to his sisters' room to be admired than Charlotte seized the tallest and handsomest of them, exclaiming, "This is the Duke of Wellington." In an instant Branwell had named his favorite Bonaparte. Emily and Anne were as ready with names and titles for the warriors of their choice and the game was soon in full swing. Whether the illustrious soldiers fought out their battles with sword or eloquent words we do not know, but we may be quite sure that they were never again allowed to behave like quiet, ordinary toys.

Another taste that the Brontë children had in common was a love for pictures. In the early years of the nineteenth century, good prints of famous pictures were both rare and expensive, and the splendid art-galleries that are the pride of northern England to-day had not yet even been thought of. Yet lovers of art the Brontës always were in a way of their own, and never happier than with brush or pencil in hand. Charlotte, in particular, scanned every picture that came in her way with eager interest. At thirteen she had decided views of her

own about what was best in art and had written in her diary a long list of the famous pictures that she hoped some day to see. Though Branwell was the only one of the children to show real talent in drawing, the efforts of his sisters were by no means wasted. It was because they had learned in their childhood to look closely and copy carefully that they were able to describe people and places in their novels so well that their readers could see them almost as vividly as they did themselves.

The handwriting of the Brontë children was as fine and small as the work of clever fairies. In the British Museum in London there is to-day a work of Charlotte Brontë's written in the same tiny characters that she learned to use in her childhood. Writing-paper was scarce at the rectory in those days and only rarely did Mr. Brontë bring home a sixpenny blank-book as a prize for the best child of the family. After much thought the young authors found a way out of their difficulties. Tiny books of coarse brown paper were sewn together by their clever fingers, and in those little volumes, often not more than three inches square, they wrote in so small a hand that a whole story scarcely took up any room at all. To be sure, no one but themselves could read the fairy writing without great

effort. Their father, however, was far too busy to try, and the good aunt upstairs was no doubt satisfied if the stitches in their hemming were as finely finished as their handwriting.

How busily they worked in their little study is shown by Charlotte's list of her own writings up to her fifteenth birthday. Authors of twice her age might well be glad to count as many volumes to their credit, for there were twenty-two in all—plays, poems, tales, and romances. The Duke of Wellington was still her favorite hero, as the titles show, but the thoughts of the young writer had begun to wander to far-away countries and distant times. There was a "Song of the Ancient Britons" and "An American Tale," to say nothing of a poem, "On Seeing the Ruins of the Tower of Babel," and a tale called, "The Three Old Washerwomen of Stratfieldsaye." If the gifted writer sometimes found the task of writing a hard one in later years, it was not for lack of early practice in the art that made her famous.

Next to Charlotte, Branwell appears to have been the most industrious writer of little books. It is quite probable that Emily and Anne were also busy with the efforts of authorship in those early years, but no tiny volumes written by them are known to

be in existence to-day. No longer ago than the year 1912 there were sold in London some interesting bits of manuscript, among which were two stories by Branwell, each written in a roughly-finished home-made book only a few inches square. The little volume attracted much attention as the work of a young author who never had the happiness of seeing himself in print. Charlotte's booklets, on the other hand, are treasured in the British Museum, as the early stepping-stones in her journey to fame, while many a reader would welcome with joy the tiniest scrap of the childish efforts through which the younger sisters taught themselves so patiently the secret of the magic power that lies in the written word.

One might perhaps wonder how children who had their full share of serious tasks and duties found time to practise authorship so persistently. But, as the old servants of the family always remembered, they had, even when they were very young, a habit of stealing into quiet corners at odd moments, pencil and paper in hand ready to set down their thoughts. Moreover, they had little interest in the ordinary games and amusements of children, so little, indeed, that they are said to have been painfully at a loss at parties where a knowledge of

"Hunt the Slipper" or "Here We Go Round the Gooseberry-bush" was the chief passport to good-fellowship. But like most clever children, they occasionally planned and carried out at home little plays which they acted with much spirit and enjoyment, though usually in the absence of their serious-minded father, we are told. Yet, in spite of Mr. Brontë's disapproval of plays and players, the oldest member of the little group of children became in later life no mean critic of dramatic art, as the description of Rachel, the famous French tragedienne, in Charlotte Brontë's novel called "Villette" plainly shows.

It was, as all the world knows, out of Charlotte's memories of a school for the daughters of clergy at which she and her sisters spent some months in the third year after their mother's death that she made the early life-history of her famous heroine, Jane Eyre. To Mr. Brontë, much perplexed in those days with the needs of his growing children, the establishment of a school that promised an education within his means seemed a rare piece of good fortune. He had, as he thought, no reason to doubt of the wisdom and good intentions of the founder. His daughter's pathetic description of Lowood and of Mr. Brocklehurst in "Jane Eyre" are sad proofs

to the contrary. Those were days, however, when many religious persons still felt that only through harshness of discipline could young people make true gains in righteous living. To the Brontë sisters, younger and more sensitive than the other pupils, the separation from their beloved moors and the homely ways of the Haworth rectory would have been in itself quite sorrow enough. It seems, indeed, almost a miracle that the eight-year-old Charlotte should have been not much the worse for her stay at the Cowan Bridge School. But that she should have remembered it all so vividly, as her famous novel proves, is a still greater marvel, and one which the world has long since agreed to account for by crediting her with genius.

Between her childish school-days and her next journey into the world in quest of knowledge lay the years during which the children at the Haworth rectory wrote so busily in their home-made books and talked so earnestly about what they read in the books and newspapers that their father was able to gather about him. Happy years they must have been, on the whole, for it cost Charlotte a bitter struggle to face the thought of change, though, as she well knew, the new scheme for her education was both wise and kind. It was Charlotte's godmother,

Mrs. Atkinson, who had planned the second adventure, furnishing, too, the money to carry it out and choosing a school as different as possible from the "Lowood" of her godchild's early recollections.

It would have been impossible, perhaps, for anyone to guess that genius lay hidden under the quiet looks and timid manners of the fifteen-year-old daughter of the Haworth household, still so small for her age that strangers seeing her during holiday visits to her godmother's house frequently regarded her as a young child, greatly to her indignation. At all events, to place within Charlotte's reach a better training in school studies than her father could provide so that she might in the future help her younger sisters to make their way in the world was, it appears, the sum total of Mrs. Atkinson's kind wishes and intentions. But, as sometimes happens, she builded better than she knew—better for the writer that was to be, and for the many readers who have found delight in her portrayal of scenes and characters that, but for Mrs. Atkinson's kindness, she would never have known. In these greater results of her interest in Charlotte's well-being Mrs. Atkinson herself found no pleasure. The good lady belonged in thought to the days when it was believed that a clergyman's daughter might be more suitably



occupied than in writing novels. But in the eager industry and dutiful behavior of her godchild during her school-days she felt great content.

The journey to Roe Head, which is about twenty miles from Haworth, was made in a queer-covered cart, out of which there stepped one cold January afternoon a shy, quiet girl who seemed to one of her future schoolmates, watching from the window, almost as quaint and old-fashioned as the cart itself. For a while the pleasant, roomy country house in which Miss Wooler's ten pupils lived and learned their lessons in cheerful fashion under wise care and guidance seemed little better than a prison to Charlotte, all sad at heart and homesick for the sights and sounds of a certain gray-walled rectory topping a hillside. The very face of the country seemed strange and unfriendly to eyes so long accustomed to the open spaces of the wild moors which at Roe Head were nowhere to be seen. Instead, there was a quieter landscape, with broad fields, wide-spreading trees, and peaceful, shady lanes—yet by no means lacking in charm and beauty, as Charlotte herself came to feel in happier days.

But it was at no time part of Charlotte Brontë's nature to allow herself to be conquered by difficulties, even when she felt them most keenly. Before

many days had passed, she roused herself to grapple with her new tasks and duties, helped and cheered not a little, as she always remembered, by the sympathy of a schoolmate to whom the pangs of homesickness were also a sad reality. To most readers of the long series of letters that mark the lifelong friendship then begun between the gentle Ellen Nussey and her famous schoolmate it seems as if, on that cold winter afternoon when Charlotte stepped timidly into the Roe Head schoolhouse, she stepped straight into Ellen Nussey's life, so "unchanged, unchanging, and unchangeable," in Charlotte's own phrase, was the feeling between them.

To the other pupils the shy newcomer was at first a perplexing puzzle, and to kind-hearted Miss Wooler a genuine problem. That lady was already known to her many friends as a person of much insight and discrimination, but never did she show those qualities to better advantage than in dealing with the pupil who was to be the most famous of her little flock. Ought a girl who knew great quantities of poetry by heart and the lives of the authors as well to be put into the second class because her knowledge of grammar and geography was of the slightest? To Charlotte's never-ending gratitude, a bold *No* was Miss Wooler's answer to the mo-

mentous question, though the older girls at first looked askance at the ignorance of their new comrade in everyday school knowledge.

But Charlotte's industry must have soon made itself felt, for never, we are told, was the well-ordered little community so near to open rebellion as on the one occasion when she had received an imperfect mark for a long and difficult lesson. Desperate threats of disobedience and strikes were in the air when Miss Wooler wisely withdrew the offending mark. Charlotte had become the acknowledged leader of her schoolmates in industry and cleverness and they were quite ready to battle boldly for her rights in true Yorkshire fashion.

That she should so promptly have made her way to the first place in the esteem of her comrades was all the more a tribute to her real worth, since there was more than one reason why she might have seemed to belong to a world different from their own. Her very speech, which showed plain traces of her father's Irish origin, had at first a foreign sound to ears accustomed only to the strong north-country accent of Yorkshire, while her clothes were regarded as odd and old-fashioned, even for country wear. Curiously enough, it was Mr. Brontë who was mainly responsible for the

second peculiarity also. His lifelong dread of fire, which caused him to forbid the use of curtains at the rectory windows, made him require his children to be dressed in woollen garments at all seasons of the year. He felt, too, a marked dislike for those fripperies of fashion which would, in other scenes and surroundings, have been to Miss Branwell as the very apple of her eye. But as the good aunt's ideas of dress were those of her own happy youth in Cornwall, it is not likely that her niece would have looked much more like other girls had Miss Branwell's fancy had a freer field.

Other difficulties in the way of good-fellowship were happily solved by the wise expedient of overlooking them. Charlotte was soon discovered to be too near-sighted to join in the favorite outdoor games of her vigorous companions. Again and again they tried to make her one of them in their cheerful pastimes, but it was of no use. She could rarely see the ball that they wished her to catch and her strength was quite unequal to their more active games. In the end they were forced to let her enjoy her outdoor leisure after her own fashion, and to believe that she was really happiest standing under a tree to watch the shapes of the flickering leaves and the patches of blue sky between them.

But for all Charlotte's awkwardness at ball-playing and her lack of interest in other games, her companions never laughed at her. They had far too much respect for what her near-sighted eyes could accomplish in more important matters. Her early interest in copying pictures had taught her to draw far more skillfully and quickly than any of her schoolmates, and her knowledge of pictures was so far beyond theirs that they were always fascinated by her eager talk of art and artists. It was Mary Taylor, the most sensible and practical of the Roe Head group, who afterwards described Charlotte's method of studying any print that came to her hand. She would go over it very slowly piecemeal, holding it very close to her eyes, but when she had finished she could explain it so well that the girls soon set her up as their chief authority in art as well as in poetry.

In politics, on the other hand, she was always at odds with the rest, who were all furious radicals, while she was of course a stanch Tory. But though obliged to contend single-handed for her views of church and state, she was able to hold her own with courage and steadiness perhaps, as she used to explain, because she had taken a keen interest in politics since she was five years old. In

actual knowledge of public matters Charlotte was always as much above her companions as in all other kinds of knowledge. But in those days when party prejudices were at their strongest in Yorkshire she could only shake her head gravely at her opponents after a hard argument and declare that, while there might be a little truth in what they said, she would never be moved an inch from what she believed to be right. It is interesting to know, however, that for all her downright speech and intense convictions she was none the less a welcome visitor at the households of her two school friends, in both of which a Tory was usually considered a very black sheep indeed.

The long walks with Miss Wooler, which were the chief recreation of the school on half-holidays, brought keener pleasure to Charlotte than to any of her companions. The countryside over which they roamed on those happy occasions had been the scene of many a hard and bitter struggle between the sturdy weavers and their employers, or masters as they used to be called, no longer ago than Miss Wooler's childhood. She often told her pupils, as they walked, how riots had been raised and factories burned by the resentful workers, who feared that the new machines for weaving would deprive

them of their hard-earned bread by making their hand-loom useless and changing the system of labor throughout northern England. Like everything else that Charlotte heard, the tales of those wild, lawless days sank deep into her mind, to bear fruit many years later in a novel called "Shirley." The germ of that famous novel of Yorkshire life was Charlotte's interest in Miss Wooler's spirited accounts of the Luddite riots, while some of its most attractive characters, Rose and Jessie Yorke, with their father, were drawn from the family of her schoolfellow, Mary Taylor. In the eyes of all Yorkshire people "Shirley" is the best and truest of Charlotte Brontë's books, and it is in "Shirley" that she writes, with all her old enthusiasm: "Our England is a bonny land, and Yorkshire is one of the bonniest nooks."

The end of Charlotte's school-days at Roe Head came when she was in her seventeenth year. With the kindest farewells from Miss Wooler and from her two chosen friends, she went back to Haworth with her new store of knowledge, to find life at the rectory moving on in the old familiar fashion. Branwell, indeed, was looking forward to a visit to London, where he hoped to study art, and had pored over the map of the great city to such good pur-

pose that he could tell intending travelers the way from street to street. The school experiences of Emily and Anne were yet to come. Tabby bustled about below stairs, as faithful and important as ever, the good aunt spent peaceful days above, and Mr. Brontë walked long miles to visit his parishioners on weekdays and delivered a sermon for their benefit each Sunday. Nothing would have seemed more unlikely to his three daughters than that Haworth and the daily life there should become known all the world over for their sakes. Yet so it was to be, though much hard-won knowledge of people and things was to be gained before they became known as writers under their chosen names of Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell.

At first the days passed quietly enough. Charlotte taught her sisters and walked with them on the moors. There were drawing-lessons given by a capable master from Bradford and much-prized visits from Ellen Nussey and Mary Taylor, Ellen proving herself a veritable queen of hearts, even in the estimation of old Tabby and her shrewd assistant, while Mary was highly valued for her sound common sense and strong intelligence. Both have left in their letters pleasant pictures of the Haworth life as they knew it and descriptions of long summer

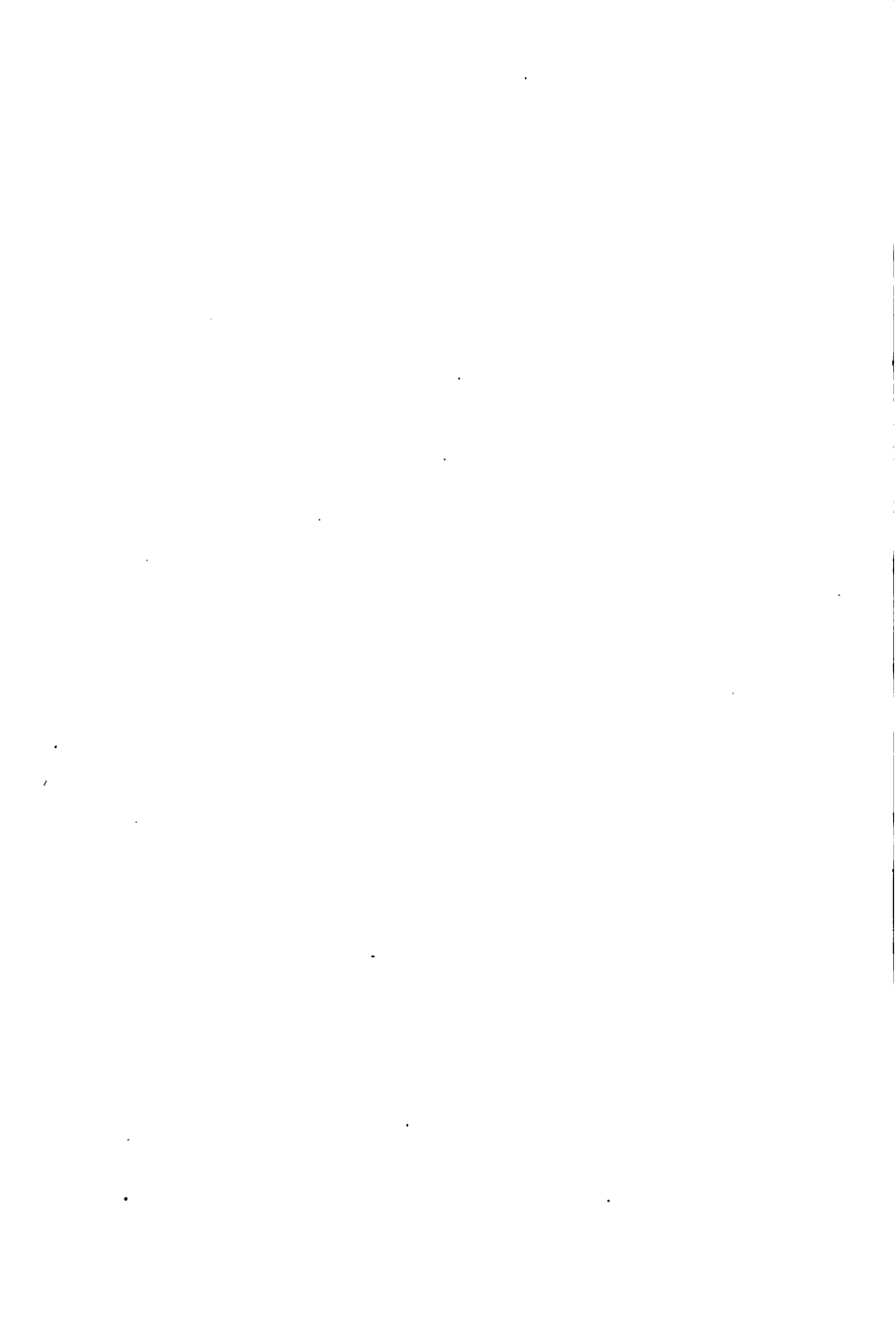


days when all the corners of the somber house seemed lit up with gleams of clever fun and youthful laughter.

To leave their home for more than brief visits proved no easier for Charlotte and her sisters as they grew toward womanhood than it had been in childhood. Yet to win independence seemed to each of them the plainest of duties, and for Englishwomen of those days the only path to independence was what Charlotte used to call "the business of governessing." Happily for her and for the world, it was in her case a path to authorship also, albeit a thorny one. The life of a governess was, as she had feared, full of dull duties and endless cares which lay as heavy fetters on the eager spirits of the Brontë sisters. For a while they dreamed of a school of their own at Haworth, and twice, through Miss Branwell's loyal kindness, did Charlotte journey to Brussels to study French and German there, in earnest preparation for the much talked-of scheme. As all the world knows, she came back, not to found a school but to write a novel. Her memorable experience of the life of a foreign school in a foreign city, where manners, religion, and even morals were so sharply different from those that she had always known, stirred her

to write as she had never written before, and in a few months Currer Bell's first long novel was complete.

Strange as it may seem, all of Charlotte Brontë's novels are made of much the same substance—the joys and sorrows, the hopes and fears, the gladness of friendship and the pangs of loneliness that she had known in her journeys through school life. But for Cowan Bridge there could have been no “Jane Eyre”; “Shirley” owes much to the happy walks and talks of the Roe Head days; while both “Villette” and “The Professor,” the novel that was the first to be written and the last to be published, are vivid pictures of the Pensionnat Heger in the far-famed city of Brussels.



## CHARLES LAMB

A LONG blue coat reaching to the ankles, leather trousers fastened to a scarlet belt, yellow stockings, and low, flat shoes with broad buckles—the description does not suggest the costume of a modern schoolboy. Yet only a few years ago, as time is reckoned in England, boys in such a dress were not an uncommon sight in the busiest streets of London, and the wearers always knew that they were sure of the respect and honor of every Londoner. For the quaint dress is that worn by the boys of the Bluecoat School, the famous Christ's Hospital founded by the boy king, Edward VI, in 1553, and to be a Bluecoat Boy is to belong to a place that has a noble history and beautiful memories.

One hundred and thirty-odd years ago—in 1782, to be very precise—a little London boy was wearing the blue coat and yellow stockings for the first time, and no doubt feeling very proud of his freshly-won dignity. He was a very little fellow indeed, not much past his seventh birthday, with bright, keen eyes, “so keen,” someone wrote of them, “that they

looked as though they could pick up pins and needles," a dark complexion, and a stammering tongue that soon learned to say clever things. Clever speeches are not always kind speeches, but there was never an unkind word said either then or later by the little new Bluecoat, whose name was Charles Lamb, and who was to become one of the best-known and perhaps the best-loved of all English writers, the "Elia" of the famous "Essays."

The seven-year-old scholar had not traveled far from his home when he passed through the gateway in Newgate Street that opened upon the paved court of Christ's Hospital. Nor did the ancient gray buildings with their great solemn hall seem strange to him. All the years of his short life had been spent among buildings as old and as gray as those of the famous school, and hardly more than ten minutes' walk distant from them. Like the school, too, his home was shut away behind one of the busiest of streets and seemed only the quieter for the nearness of the rushing life of a great city.

An archway in the street called the Strand leads to-day, as it did in Charles Lamb's time, to the Temple, a group of buildings in which for centuries English lawyers have lived and worked. Past the outer walls of the Temple, from early morning to



**Charles Lamb**

**After the portrait by Hancock in the National Portrait Gallery**



late at night, pour crowds of hurrying people, but within are sheltered passages and green gardens, as still as if the restless eager city were miles away.



THE INNER TEMPLE GARDENS

In these gardens grew the red and white roses of Lancaster and York, that, when plucked, marked the beginning of the terrible wars of the Roses, in 1461. Now the flower-month of June has for many years brought to the Temple Gardens wonderful



roses of whatever hue roses may wear, sent to the great annual rose-show from all parts of an England whose gardens still keep their smiling beauty, in spite of the tragedy of modern war. But at all times the quiet walks and the soft green lawns stretching down to the smoothly-flowing Thames River offer a pleasant resting-place to a tired wanderer in London. "A man would give something to be born in such a place," wrote Lamb, in an essay telling of his first home.

Charles Lamb was born in what is called the Inner Temple, on the tenth of February, 1775. The house on the ground floor of which his family lived is still to be seen in the block of buildings known as the Crown Office Row. Opposite are iron gates opening upon the famous gardens. To little Charles, the history belonging to the gardens must have been made more real by Shakespeare's words in "Henry VI":

"This brawl to-day  
Grown to this faction in the Temple Gardens,  
Shall send between the red rose and the white  
A thousand souls to death and deadly night."

He knew the lines very early, one may be sure. From the time when he could read at all he was

always fond of old books and old plays, so fond that when he grew up and began to be a writer, he came to write curiously like the old-time authors whom he knew so well. Once, when he was told of this, and warned that the readers of his own time might not care for a style of writing so much like that of another age, he said emphatically, "I'll write for antiquity." But his disregard of the warning has justified itself. His readers love him all the more because of the old-time echoes that linger in his work.

The old books that the little boy loved to read did not belong to his parents. They were the property of a gentleman named Samuel Salt, the employer of John Lamb, Charles's father. The rooms in which the family lived were owned by this gentleman, who occupied another set of rooms in the same building. In Mr. Salt, who was what is called a "Bencher," or senior member of the Temple, John Lamb had a kind friend as well as a generous master. And the kindness was well deserved. John Lamb, his son tells us, took care of all Mr. Salt's affairs, and was "at once his clerk, his good servant, his dresser, his friend—his guide, stop-watch, auditor, treasurer." No wonder the absent-minded old gentleman was grateful, and did all in

his power to help the children of John Lamb to a footing in the world.

Few troubles and much happiness fell to the share of the family that lived their contented life in Mr. Salt's chambers. Three children in all lived to grow up: John, Mary, two years younger, and Charles, the youngest of all by twelve years. John was a bright, handsome boy, the favorite and companion of his mother, while Mary and the gentle, thoughtful little lad with the stammering speech were always together, until school separated them. The twelve long years between Charles and Mary made her seem more like a guardian or a mother to him than a sister. Indeed, she seemed so to him as long as he lived; and when great and terrible sorrow came into the lives of both through a sad mental affliction from which Mary suffered, their deep love for each other taught them how to bear it together.

Charles Lamb's father was fond of poetry, and could sometimes write bright and amusing verses of his own. Born in the east-country town of Lincoln, which is built partly on a hill and partly on a plain, he had interesting stories to tell of the schoolboy encounters in which he used to take part, when the Above Boys, who lived on the hill, would

lead skirmishes against the Below Boys, or the plain-dwellers.

Another member of the household in the Temple was an aunt, Miss Sarah Lamb—Aunt Hetty, as the children called her. Aunts often have special favorites in a group of nephews and nieces, and Charles was Aunt Hetty's. To most people she seemed odd and perhaps a little hard, but to Charles she was gentleness and kindness itself. "He was the only thing in the world which she loved," she used often to say. Indeed, Charles Lamb the boy, as well as Charles Lamb the man, seems to have met few people whose hearts, no matter how hard or selfish, did not soften to him. Perhaps the reason for this kindly feeling toward him lay in his own kind heart. Lamb could only with the very greatest difficulty be made to think harshly of anyone. "How could I hate him?" he once said, of someone who had done him an ill turn. "Don't I know him? I never *could* hate anyone I knew." And so the aunt from whom others kept somewhat aloof found in her youngest nephew a little friend and companion to whom she could devote herself. In a letter written many years afterwards, he tells of her goodness to him during his school-days; how she, fearing, not with-

out reason, that the school dinners were but meager, would save some good thing from the family table, and carry it to him in a basin ("love forbidding pride," as he says); and then find her happiness in watching him enjoy the delicacy.

There was another quaint personage belonging to the Temple whose friendship Charles shared with his father. This was the sub-treasurer and librarian of the Temple, Mr. Norris by name. Mr. Norris knew very little about books in spite of the fact that so many were confided to his care. Nevertheless, he was fond of assuming an air of being very learned. On one occasion when he had been vainly struggling to read a volume of Chaucer's poems and had found the queer words too much for him, he gravely remarked to his little friend: "In those old books, Charley, there is sometimes a deal of very indifferent spelling."

We do not know of any child companions of Charles Lamb during the earliest years of his life. The Temple is a solemn place, and few of the grave lawyers who worked over their musty parchments there seem to have brought children to dwell within its gates. But at the age of six he went to his first school, so that there must have been schoolfellows, though we hear of none by name. No doubt the

little thoughtful boy preferred the company of his sister Mary to that of his fellow-pupils in the small, uncomfortable school, "looking into a discolored, dingy garden" in a narrow street near the Temple. Here he learned reading and writing in the morning, as Mary had done in the afternoon class for girls some years earlier. It was a dull place, of which he seems to have kept no pleasant recollection except that of having won the prize for best spelling. Of that honor he was vain to the very end of his life, writing of it with pride when he was more than fifty years old. But if he learned spelling there, he learned nothing else, and even the spelling he probably knew before entering the school. Mary had taught him his letters very early and there had been lessons besides, from an old lady named Mrs. Reynolds, who lived in the Temple, and who had interesting tales to tell, as well as lessons to teach. The famous Dr. Goldsmith had lived in the Temple for some years before his death, and, as she was always ready to tell anyone who would listen, he had lent her his own copy of his poem, "The Deserted Village," being too poor to buy her a copy for a gift, as his generous heart would have wished. Charles Lamb never ceased to be a friend to Mrs. Reynolds, and

when she had grown quite old, he gave her a liberal pension. Surely no other schoolmistress was ever quite so fortunate in her neighbors as well as in her pupils!

There were glimpses of the country, too, for the little city-born boy. In the pleasant county of Hertfordshire, just north of London, was a farmhouse called Mackery End, which belonged to the family of his mother. He was taken there for a visit when a very little child, the mother-sister Mary, as always, being in charge of him. "The oldest thing I remember is Mackery End," he wrote, forty years later; and one of his most delightful essays tells how he and Mary, both grown middle-aged, went down into Hertfordshire to find once again the old house they had talked about all their lives. "Though *I* had forgotten it, *we* had never forgotten being there together," he says, in a pretty passage that shows the closeness of his affectionate companionship with Mary, who is lovingly described under the name of Bridget Elia.

Charles knew mansions as well as farmhouses. Not far from Mackery End was Blakesware, the handsome country residence of a wealthy family named Plumer. Here Charles's grandmother, Mrs. Mary Field, was housekeeper. Old-fashioned Eng-

lish housekeepers were very dignified personages, and while the family was away Mrs. Field's grandson was quite at liberty to wander through the empty, echoing hall and great, deserted rooms, looking at the family portraits, adopting them in child-fashion as his own relations, and giving them names to suit his fancy. So dearly did he grow to love Blakesware that, though what he believed to be a beautiful lake could be plainly seen through the trees which surrounded the house, he was never tempted to approach the shining water. To do so he would have had to leave the grounds of his beloved Blakesware, if only for a few moments, and that he could not persuade himself to do. Many years later he was surprised to find that the lake was no lake after all, but only a pretty brook. By that time he had come to love the sights and sounds of the London streets more dearly perhaps than any other author who ever trod their pavements; but he could still remember gratefully what the gardens and fields of pleasant Hertfordshire had meant to him in his boyhood.

Theatergoing began for Charles almost as early as going to school, and was a privilege much more highly appreciated. He was only six when he saw his first play, or plays, rather, for in those generous



theatrical days there was always a second production called the "afterpiece" following the important play of the occasion. Lamb has told us how, on the afternoon of the promised treat, he waited with a beating heart for the rain that spoils so many pleasures in London to cease so that he might begin his happy journey. The old Drury Lane theater seemed to the eager little visitor a realm of magic. To his six-year-old imagination, the white columns on either side of the boxes were made of nothing less delightful than sugar-candy, and the green curtain veiled something very like heaven. The play was about Persian history, and not very easily understood by a little boy; but it was a play, and that was enough. There were two other visits to the theater that year; then his playgoing ceased for seven years, and the serious business of his boyish life began at Christ's Hospital, where all playgoing was a forbidden indulgence.

It was only ten days before the end of his brief reign that the boy king, Edward VI, had founded Christ's Hospital by turning an ancient monastery in Newgate Street into a school for the education and support of children of poor citizens of London. A statue of the little king, "the boy patron of boys," stood in a niche to the right of

the gateway leading into the entrance court stood, not stands, because the school is no longer to be found in Newgate Street. The tide of London life has swept the old buildings away and the school is now in the green Sussex country. The boys are



CHRIST'S HOSPITAL

no doubt healthier and happier than when they worked and played in the most crowded district of London, but Londoners are the poorer for a sight that was always welcome to the busiest of them.

Admission to Christ's Hospital has from the time of its founding been regarded as a great privilege by people of small fortune who desire an excellent

education. A presentation to the school, as the right of admission is called, is therefore a very valuable gift, and can be had only through the influence of some member of the board of governors that control the affairs of the school. It was Mr. Samuel Salt whose recommendation made Charles Lamb at the age of seven a Bluecoat Boy, and so gave the famous school its most famous pupil.

The division of the school in which Charles was placed was the grammar-school, where the boys were taught Latin and Greek and very little else. Another Bluecoat Boy who afterwards became famous, Leigh Hunt, tells us that it was quite possible for a pupil of the grammar-school to arrive at the age of fifteen without knowing his multiplication table. Charles's Latin lessons were the first studies in which Mary could not be his guide, for Latin was not for girls in those days.

How Mary felt when the little brother brought home his strange books in a language she could not read is told in some verses written by Charles many years later. A sister complains to her brother, who is learning Latin :

“ Shut these odious books up, brother,  
They have made you quite another

Thing from what you used to be :—  
Once you liked to play with me—  
Now you leave me all alone,—  
And are so conceited grown  
With your Latin, you'll scarce look  
Upon any English Book"—

The brother in the poem tries to soothe his sister by suggesting that she study Latin with him; and it is pleasant to think that when Mary, a great many years later, came to know Latin well enough to teach it to some young friends, she remembered something of what the little Bluecoat brother had once taught her.

Though Charles became a very good Latin scholar in the seven years he spent in Christ's Hospital, he did not succeed in gaining the very highest rank in the school. He never became a Grecian, which was the name given to the head boys of the grammar-school. These boys were sent to Oxford or to Cambridge, and then, as a rule, became clergymen. There were never more than two or three Grecians at a time in the school, and the younger boys looked up to them with almost more awe and reverence than to the masters themselves.

To this dignity Charles never quite attained, but he came very near it, in being a Deputy Grecian,

with only a little less Latin and Greek to his credit than if his title had not included the word Deputy. Indeed, it was only his stammering speech that kept him out of the highest class. A stammering clergyman, the heads of the school very properly thought, would never do; and as all Grecians were expected to become clergymen, the envied rank was not to be given to Charles Lamb. Charles himself, however, was quite sufficiently proud of his place in the school. Writing to a schoolmate when they had both reached middle age, he says: "I don't know how it is, but I keep my rank in fancy still since school-days. I can never forget I was a Deputy Grecian!"

Life as a Bluecoat Boy was probably pleasanter for Charles than for most of his schoolfellows. Homesickness he did not suffer from, for the Temple was near by, and there was a delightfully long list of holidays, which would make the modern schoolboy decidedly envious. There were nine-and-thirty of these red-letter days, when the lucky London scholar might hurry through the crowded street to the rooms in Crown Office Row, where parents and aunt and sister were ready to welcome him. Not so fortunate were the other boys—Coleridge the poet, for example, who entered the school at the

same time as Charles Lamb, though he was three years older. His friends were far away in Devonshire, and he missed them sadly. Once, when he was crying on the first day of his return after the holidays, the headmaster consoled him after this fashion: "Boy, the school is your father! Boy, the school is your mother! Boy, the school is your brother! the school is your sister! the school is your first cousin, and your second cousin, and all the rest of your relations! Let's have no more crying!"

Charles was again fortunate in spending much of his time under the care of a master very different from the one who read Coleridge the sermon on homesickness. While the Reverend James Boyer, who had charge of the upper school, made his boys learn their Latin and Greek at the cost of many an encounter with the birch rod, the pupils of Charles's teacher, the Reverend Matthew Fields, had the pleasantest times, reading stories, or making cat's-cradles, whenever they preferred those occupations to studying their grammar. Mr. Boyer would sometimes send in to borrow a rod of Mr. Field, and would then remark, with a sarcastic smile, "how fresh the twigs looked!" Charles's Latin and Greek may have suffered a little under the happy-go-lucky teaching of Mr. Field, but as he him-

self tells us, his temper was probably better for his having escaped Mr. Boyer's severities.

But the greatest piece of good fortune that Charles Lamb's school-days brought him was the friendship of Coleridge, who was a poet and philosopher even when a schoolboy, and whose company was always a delight to people who liked to listen to wise talk. Indeed, Coleridge's school-days had not been left behind him more than a few years when the landlord of an inn offered him free board and lodging if he would only stay and talk to guests as he was in the habit of talking to his friends. The friendship between Lamb and Coleridge,—“the inspired charity-boy,” as Lamb called him,—which began in Christ's Hospital, lasted to the end of their lives, and brought both, though perhaps Lamb especially, an immense amount of happiness.

There were other friends, too, of course, whose companionship made the school-days pass pleasantly. We find their names in the essays on which Lamb loved to tell of the old days in the cloisters. The list of friends is a long one, for, throughout Charles Lamb's school life, as in his later life, to know him was to become in some degree his friend. While all the other Bluecoat Boys were called by their

last names only, no one ever mentioned Lamb's name without the *Charles*. "There was no other boy of the name of Lamb," says the schoolmate from whose memories we learn this fact, "and so the addition was unnecessary, but there was an implied kindness in it and it was a proof that his gentle manners excited that kindness."

Lamb's school life ended early. Since there could be no Oxford or Cambridge days for him, it was his duty to fit himself to be a breadwinner as soon as he was able. At fifteen he left Christ's Hospital and went out into the world where he was to work faithfully, to love books and friends devotedly and well, to meet and endure great sorrow nobly, and to earn fame as the wise and kindly author of the "Essays of Elia."

Many great and famous names are a part of the history of the Bluecoat School, as the present scholars will proudly tell you. They will speak to you of statesmen, historians, and learned men who once wore the quaint uniform of the ancient school. The memory of the poet Coleridge is one of their greatest treasures. But the name that they love best, and that is oftenest on their lips when they tell of the past that gives their school its glory, is the name of the gentle-hearted Charles Lamb.





## JANE AUSTEN

THE year that saw the outbreak of the American Revolution saw also the birth of an English writer in whose books there is never a hint of coming change, nor indeed of any journeys that seem to us much more exciting than the migrations of the Vicar of Wakefield "from the blue bed to the brown." And yet the name of Jane Austen is known wherever English novels are read, and in the remotest corners of the world she has loyal champions who declare that to be counted among the frequent readers of her books is to be a traveler on one of the highways to happiness.

The reason is not difficult to find. In all of Jane Austen's pictures of her time the colors are as bright and clear as though she had labored at her art only yesterday. To turn the pages of one of her stories is to understand it all—how stupid and dull bores could be in those far-away days, how four young couples eager to dance and a few well-disposed wax candles made that wonderful thing called "a ball," and how the choice of a striped

or a sprigged muslin to be worn at the gay Assembly Rooms at Bath might well seem to a tremulous heroine a decision for happiness or for woe.



BATH PUMP ROOM

The writer who at twenty-one was busily shaping the first of the charming stories that hold their own so well to-day was born at Steventon, a tiny village in Hampshire, the English county that stretches from behind the Isle of Wight northward toward Windsor. Both Jane Austen's father, who was a clergyman, and her mother were of good

family and blessed with relatives who had titles and landed estates to their credit. Both parents could, moreover, count cousins with men who had made their mark in the great universities. Jane's father had himself until his marriage been a fellow at St. John's College, Oxford, where he was known as "the handsome proctor," though noted besides for his sound knowledge of Latin and Greek. It was in fact at Oxford that he wooed and won his wife, then visiting her uncle, who held the proud position of Master of Balliol College for more than half a century, and from Oxford the young couple made their way to the Hampshire parsonage where they were to begin life. Those were days when roads were muddy and lanes were narrow in good earnest, and the wedding journey was made on horseback, the bride's going-away gown being a scarlet riding-habit, which Mrs. Austen, like a prudent housewife, cut over some years later into a suit for one of her little sons. One wonders if she had ever read of the fate of the Sunday finery of the thrifty Mrs. Primrose and her daughters.

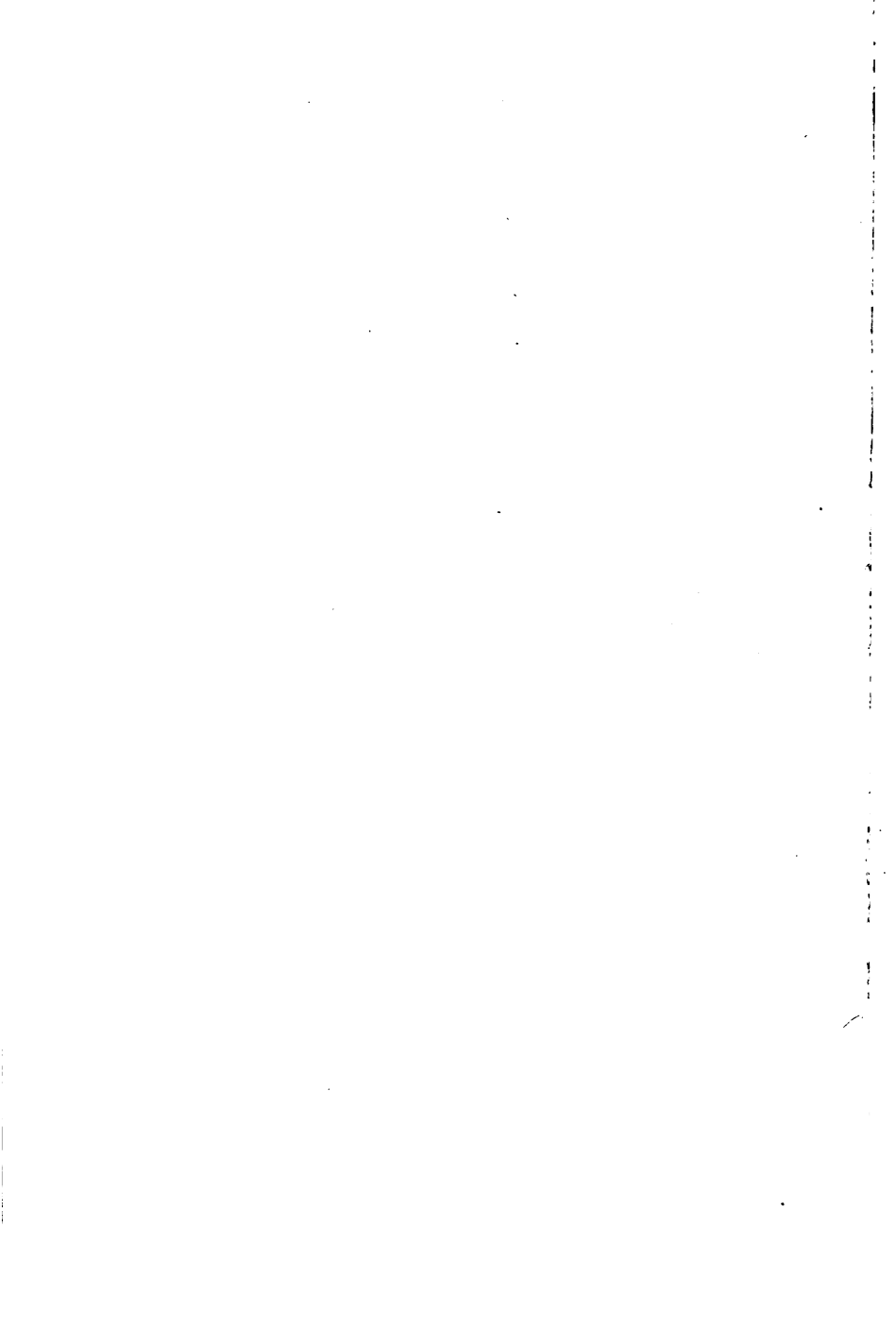
At all events, if not quite the equal of the Vicar's good wife in her devotion to "pickling, preserving, and cookery," Mrs. Austen prided herself greatly on her management of household affairs.

In the cheerful letters to her kinsfolk for which she was noted she writes, now of her nice dairy with six good cows, and now of the handsome healthy looks of her seven sons and daughters, "reckoned fine children," she adds with motherly pride. The three older sons, a daughter named Cassandra after her mother, a fourth boy named Francis, who became an Admiral of the Fleet, Jane, and the youngest brother, Charles, who also lived to be a notable figure in the English navy, might, one would suppose, have sufficed to give their mother as many cares as once fell to the lot of a certain character in a well-known nursery rhyme. But since Mr. Austen was in the habit of adding to his income by taking young boys into his family as pupils the wonder of his wife's dexterity grows until we learn that Jane Austen's parents followed the old-fashioned English custom of putting their children "out to nurse," which meant that each of the little Austens lived until the age of two under the care of a trustworthy cottage mother and saw its own parents only during daily visits.

That they were always warmly welcomed back into the family group once they were able "to run alone" is plain enough from the pride with which



**Jane Austen**  
**After an original family portrait**



their mother's letters tell of their childish achievements. Of the babyhood of Jane there is, however, no special mention except that her father writes to his sister of the birth of a little Jenny who is "a present plaything for her sister Cassy and a future companion." Never was father a truer prophet! As the children grew up together, Jane became a devoted admirer of the sister who was three years her elder, carrying her devotion to such lengths that their mother used to say, half in jest and half in earnest, that "if Cassandra were going to have her head cut off, Jane would insist on sharing the same fate."

All traces of the rectory in which the Austen family lived until Jane had written her third novel have long since disappeared, but the site of her early home can be pointed out, and bits of description found here and there in the cheerful family annals have, with the help of some ancient pencil sketches, made its friendly aspect seem real enough. It stood in a region of green meadows dotted with great elm trees, not far from a scattered village of well-kept cottages, each with its own bright garden. A winding carriage-drive led from the main road up to a latticed porch set in the middle of the broad house-front, which had on both stories cheer-



ful windows, placed well apart. The high gabled roof shaded by protecting elm trees gave an air of dignity to the whole, while two wings built out at the back fronted a sunny garden where flowers and vegetables grew together in friendliest fashion. Beyond the garden was a high grassy terrace and at the end of a path leading up to the terrace a sun-dial. Facing it all—garden, terrace, and warning sun-dial—were the bow-windows of the quiet study in which the father of the household pursued his scholarly labors, without hindrance from the noise and bustle of his thriving household.

The chief beauty of southern England has always been said to be in its hedgerows. It was for the hedgerows that the Puritan Priscilla longed in the early springtime, knowing that they were "in blossom now, and the country all like a garden." And it was "by hedgerow elms" that another Puritan, the young John Milton, best loved in cheerful moods to walk at early dawn when "the great sun begins his state." The hedgerows at Steventon are irregular borders of shrubbery and elms, under whose shelter early primroses and anemones are often found, and woodland strollers sometimes rest and while away their time with familiar talk, as Jane Austen well remembered when she came to

write "Persuasion." One such leafy border, with a quiet path beside it, was in her time called the "Church Walk" because it led straight up a hill to the door of the parish church. But the pleasant path had its weekday uses as well, for beyond the church it extended to the Old Manor House, an ivy-covered mansion dating from Tudor times, where lived a family whose younger members often joined the Austens in youthful mirth and jollity.

The church itself, a building of soft gray stone which had some seven centuries of age behind it when the Austens settled at Steventon, shows, despite its modest size, traces of no mean skill on the part of its builder. To modern eyes, however, its chief feature of interest is the squire's pew, a heavy oak structure like a small room, built to the right of the chancel. With its solid door and comfortable cushions, one might feel that the squire, once inside, would be safely withdrawn from all worldly concerns until the end of sermon-time, at least. But, alas for whisperers and other offenders! The upper part of the pew is fitted with carved open tracery, and a squire with Sir Roger de Coverley's turn of mind must have found it only too easy to observe his tenants in the discharge of their Sunday duties of prayer and praise.

The life of a country rector was in Mr. Austen's time still very much what the rector chose to make it, as the descriptions of clergy in his daughter's novels show plainly enough. But neither the time-serving Mr. Collins, whose meanness of soul she sketches so cleverly in "Pride and Prejudice," nor any of his light-minded brethren who with their follies and fancies play so large a part in her other stories, can boast of any resemblance to the writer's own father. Like all the better men of his calling, Mr. Austen took a serious if limited view of his duties; his church was never left without its services, held in due time and season, and a sewing-basket for the benefit of the poor, and help and comfort for the sick were among the frequent cares of his wife and daughters. But for the rest, he led very much the life of other country gentlemen of the same position, except that to his interest in his pigs and sheep he added an equal interest in the progress of his sons and other pupils on their path to the University.

Mr. Austen's pupils did his skill much credit, and the pigs and sheep appear also to have been managed with much dexterity, but the education of his daughters may well have seemed a perplexing problem in so busy a household. At any rate, Jane

found herself, when she was about eight years old, dispatched in Cassandra's company to a boarding-school at Reading, in the next county. The Abbey School, a famous place in its day, was kept by the widow of a French gentleman, in a great house surrounded by a beautiful garden quite near the picturesque ruins of Reading Abbey, a Benedictine monastery of ancient date. To those romantic ruins Jane owed, perhaps, that sense of the mysterious charm of secret panels and winding stairs that stirs her youthful heroine in "Northanger Abbey." To the garden she must have owed many happy hours, for the pupils were encouraged to spend much time there, and if she owed little to the school itself except the beginning of an interest in French, her parents could have felt no concern, for only the certainty that Jane would be miserable without Cassandra had caused her mother to send the little girl from home.

In later years when it had been removed to London, the Abbey School had under its charge more than one famous pupil, Miss Mitford, the author of "Our Village," and Fanny Kemble, the celebrated actress, being at different times among the number. In Miss Mitford's "Life" there are lively accounts of pleasant school terms, in no way spoiled by the

frequent visits of finishing masters in Italian, music, and dancing, and crowned at the end of the year by charming ballets and other festivities, on which delightful occasions the pupils were transformed into gliding nymphs and picturesque shepherdesses. Those were days, indeed, when a graceful method of entering and leaving a carriage and the proper depth of a courtesy were regarded as matters of the first importance. Though she was herself too young to have profited much by such instruction at the Abbey School, it can safely be said that none of Jane Austen's heroines shows any lack of early training in the graces of life.

Few of her heroines, however, go to school, perhaps because her own stay at Reading was her only experience of school life. Jane Austen had at all times a strong dislike to writing of things that were not wholly familiar to her. Once in later life, when appealed to by a clever niece for advice about the plot of a story which the young girl was attempting to work out, she counseled: "Let the Portmans go to Ireland, but as you know nothing of the manners there you had better not go with them." The one description of school life found in Jane Austen's novels has therefore all the more interest since the picture may well be drawn from her own school-

days. It is in "Emma" that she writes: "Mrs. Goddard was the mistress of a school . . . a real honest, old-fashioned boarding-school where a reasonable quantity of accomplishments were sold at a reasonable price and where girls might be sent to be out of the way and scramble themselves into a little education without any danger of coming back prodigies. Mrs. Goddard's school was in high repute. She had an ample house and garden, gave the children plenty of wholesome food, and let them run about a great deal in summer."

The Austen children, at any rate, did not come back prodigies, and Jane was at all times as far as a clever person well could be from making claim to any great store of knowledge. Late in her life, she met the suggestion of an admiring reader that she should attempt a learned novel with something like horror, saying, with a sort of humorous modesty: "I may boast myself with all possible vanity to be the most unlearned and uninformed female who ever dared to be an authoress." But, nevertheless, lessons there must have been in her girlhood at the Steventon rectory, in her father's leisure hours, perhaps, or when the oldest brother, home to spend the long vacations, placed all the freshly-

stored knowledge of a young Oxonian at his little sister's disposal.

It is thought that this brother, with his ten years of seniority and marked love for literature, must have counted for much in guiding his clever sister's tastes. None the less, her favorite authors were, as one might guess, people who wrote in what seemed to her a clear and sensible fashion. Of the slow-moving stories of Richardson, the father of the English novel, she never tired, while the "Evelina," "Cecilia," and "Camilla" of Fanny Burney were like triple guides on her own road to authorship. But poetry had also its power to charm, if only it were poetry that described the daily life of simple people, like the poetry of Crabbe; or if, like Cowper's gentle verse, it pictured the homely beauty of a wayside flower or the timid fears of some frightened creature of the woods.

For that great master of common sense, Samuel Johnson, she had a strong respect, but, happily for her readers, was never moved to imitate the ponderous sentences in which, as Goldsmith once remarked, the Doctor could make little fishes talk like whales. Of Sir Walter Scott's earliest novel she wrote on its first appearance: "I do not mean to like Waverley, but I fear I must." Scott, for his

part, admired in Jane Austen "the exquisite touch which renders commonplace things and characters interesting," referring with lovable modesty to his own splendid efforts as being in "the big bow-wow strain."

How soon after her brief school-days had ended Jane Austen began to practise her favorite amusement of writing little stories and plays we do not know, but by the time she was sixteen she was able to count to her credit a pile of copy-books filled with neatly-written manuscript. As one might suspect, those early efforts contain no solemn discourse on high and lofty themes, but are full, instead, of clever fun and nonsense. The list of the characters in one of her little comedies includes Old Humbug, Young Humbug, and Mrs. Humbug, all of whom deport themselves much as their names would suggest. But the young writer could evidently, even in those early days, laugh at herself as well as at others, for on the title-page of another of the manuscript volumes is the confession: "Effusions of Fancy by a very Young Lady, consisting of Tales in a Style entirely new."

That all of her later novels, as well as her early girlish sketches, owe a great deal to the happy family life of which she was a part is clear enough.



If Jane Austen's younger heroines were always overjoyed at the prospect of a ball, we find the author confessing in a friendly letter that she herself could "just as well dance for a week as an hour." To sympathize with the distress of a youthful heroine who lies awake ten minutes "debating between her spotted and her tamboured muslin" will come easily enough to the novelist who writes to the ever-sympathetic Cassandra to describe a gown "like my blue one which you always told me sat me so well." The gallant naval officers in "Mansfield Park" and "Persuasion" are of a surety cousins, at the very least, to the flesh-and-blood brothers of whom Jane was always so fond and proud, while the impulsive Emma who cannot forbear laughing at the never-ending prattle of poor, kind-hearted, foolish Miss Bates is, we suspect, even more closely related to them all.

The current of life flowed bright and clear in the Austen household while the brothers and sisters were busy with the all-engrossing occupation of growing up. The eldest son followed most closely in his father's footsteps, both in his Oxford days and in his later career, becoming a clergyman with a scholarly mind and a keen love of literature. The second brother, Edward, proved the fairy prince of

the family. The affectionate nature and fun-loving disposition that made him a reigning favorite at home made him also a welcome visitor in the household of some wealthy relatives who, adopting him as their son, endowed him with broad lands and ample fortune. Under their guidance, the young man made "the grand tour" in the dignified fashion of those days, visiting the wonders of Dresden and of Rome, where a handsome portrait of him was painted, and, happily, bringing back with him to England the same warm heart and kindly sympathies that had won him his good fortune.

But it was the third son, Henry, who was always Jane's chief favorite and ally. Handsomer than the others and, in his father's opinion, more highly gifted, he yet failed of notable success, but, perhaps for that very reason, had the more time to spare for the hopes and aims of others. It was Henry to whom Jane read the manuscript of "Mansfield Park," as they journeyed together to London in a comfortable chaise, and it was Henry who managed her affairs in the years when publishers were to be encountered and bargains made. Of the younger brothers we read that, leaving home at twelve to enter naval schools, they were well on their way to be junior officers in Nelson's navy at

the age when boys of to-day are only thinking of entering college. That the love of their parents and sisters followed them in their perilous journeys they well understood and were grateful, in the down-right fashion of seafaring men. Their letters, brief but manly and sincere, were passed eagerly from hand to hand. We hear of Charles, "our own particular brother," as his sisters used to call him, gaining a victory and winning a prize of money, with which he forthwith buys gold chains and topaz crosses in order, as Jane remarks, to make his sisters "unbearably fine." And of Francis, who died at ninety-one an Admiral of the Fleet, we read that among the cherished papers carefully stored in his desk was found the letter that his father had sent him to bid him godspeed on his first cruise.

Happy as Jane Austen was in the affection of her parents and her ever loyal brothers, the note of deepest music in her life was her love for Cassandra, which, beginning, as we know, in her babyhood and growing with her growth, had its tender share in all that she said and did. On the upper floor of the Steventon rectory was the room which the sisters always shared, and adjoining it a dressing-room in which were kept Cassandra's drawings and Jane's piano, as well as the little

mahogany desk at which she liked to write. It was a plain little room, as a young niece later described it, with a square of chocolate-colored carpet on the shining floor, some painted shelves for books, and an oval mirror between the windows, but within its simple walls there was unbroken happiness as well as gay companionship in matters great and small.

In two of the novels that were written at the Steventon rectory, sisterly love and devotion plays a great part. In each of the stories, one sister is graver and quieter than the other, set as it might seem in contrast to a nature with more of eagerness and fire. So it must have been with Cassandra and Jane. It is to Cassandra's opinion that we find Jane deferring, whether she is trimming herself a cap in the latest London fashion or shaping the plot of her newest novel, and if only Cassandra be satisfied, the world may go its way, for all Jane cares. On a visit from home, she is mindful of Cassandra's love for her garden and begs a root of the plants that she likes best; and again, when sickness has come upon her, she writes to her favorite niece in loving praise of Aunt Cass as a nurse, "so assiduous and unwearied."

Though Jane Austen was never out of England, she must not on that account be supposed to have

been wholly lacking in the zest for change and the joy of adventure. Beautiful scenery she loved so much that she used to say that delight in it ought to be one of the joys of heaven, but to travel at all in the England of her day was a matter requiring no little skill and contrivance. Moreover, ladies were never expected to travel alone, and the consternation of the heroine of "Northanger Abbey," who is forced to make a journey of fifty miles in post-chaises, unaccompanied, is real enough. But in picturing the timid fears of the father of another heroine whose family is about to brave the terrors of a short drive through a gentle fall of snow Jane Austen is giving way to her harmless enjoyment of the ridiculous. Neither deep snows nor country roads at their worst, and their worst was very bad in those days, could have kept the Austens at home if a ball or a pleasant meeting of friends was to be the goal of an evening's adventure. But a journey to another part of the country was always regarded as a serious undertaking for Jane or her sister. A chaise had to be hired and a brother or good-natured cousin pledged as an escort before further plans could be made, and for the same reason visits were sometimes much prolonged, even for those days when a visit of only a

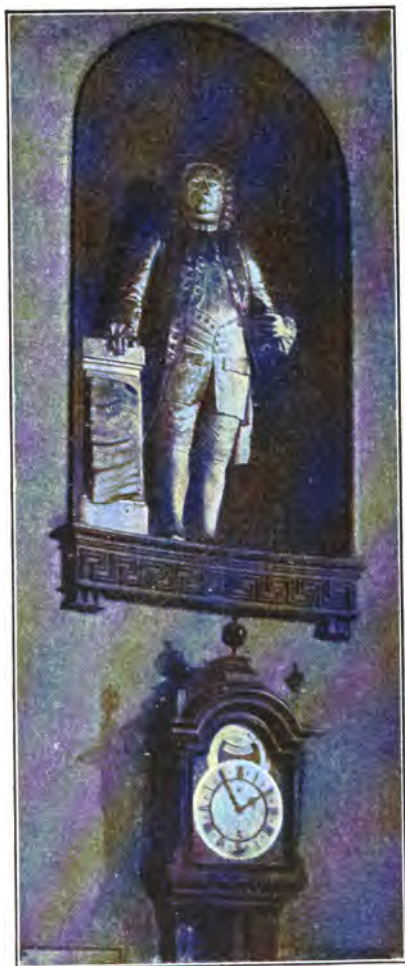
week or two was not thought worthy of the name.

However, Jane had, when she was about fifteen, the good luck to have herself conveyed to the ancient city of Bath on a visit to her aunt and uncle who had long lived there. The gay life of the famous health resort is, as all her readers remember, the background against which she paints the figures of the gayest and the gravest of her heroines, the simple-hearted Catherine Morland and the steadfast Anne Elliot. Much closer knowledge of Bath was to be hers in later years, but one can fancy the bright-eyed girl of fifteen, of whom such a charming portrait was then being painted, catching an occasional glimpse of a possible hero or heroine, as she followed her aunt demurely to the services in the beautiful Abbey Church or to the celebrated Pump Room.

Though to the curious stranger of to-day that pompous, dignified, eighteenth-century building, with its tall, fluted columns and its statue of Beau Nash, once master of ceremonies and arbiter of fashion within its walls, seems to belong almost as much to the past as the great Roman baths that first made the springs celebrated, in Jane Austen's novels and in her letters it starts to life in a way wholly delightful. The balls and concerts given

on alternate evenings in the gay Assembly Rooms could not have been among her privileges at her first visit. But the sights of the Pump Room, where the waters were handed by attendants in cap and apron to crowds of visitors, and where gayly-dressed ladies stepped from their sedan chairs to sip their morning draught in the company of elderly gentlemen in knee-breeches and embroidered waistcoats or younger ones in long-tailed blue coats with brass buttons, must have brought joy indeed to the youthful visitor from the quiet country parsonage.

Jane and Cassandra never left their mother at the same time, fortunately for us, for it is to the frequent letters exchanged during their visits from home that we owe our knowledge of the more prosaic doings of the Austen household. Young ladies of those days were, it would appear, accustomed to concern themselves greatly with the mysteries of housekeeping, carefully copying the famous *recipés* for tansy pudding and gooseberry wine which passed from hand to hand as precious possessions, and keeping an ever-watchful eye on kitchen and larder. Jane, as the younger sister, felt, as she always confessed, very important when in Cassandra's absence she was given sole charge of the realm. "I am very grand indeed," she writes



STATUE OF BEAU NASH IN BATH  
PUMP ROOM



on one such occasion, and goes on to relate proudly that she is carrying about with her the keys of the store-closet and has twice, since beginning her letter, had orders to give in the kitchen! And when her own turn for visiting comes, she is still full of interest, demanding to be told when they begin the new tea and the new white wine at home and concluding with the laughing remark, "I am still a cat if I see a mouse," by which she evidently meant that visiting in scenes of greater grandeur did not make home chronicles seem dull.

Her remarks about matters of dress are half-serious and half-laughing in much the same way. She is quick to notice the novelties of fashion and to adopt them, too, provided they are becoming, but always ready to laugh at herself if her interest in them goes too far, or if they pass the bounds of common sense. On one of her later visits to Bath she writes to Cassandra, in much perplexity about the new custom of wearing artificial fruit in hats instead of flowers. "A plum or a greengage would cost three shillings and cherries and grapes about five," she gravely reports, and then remarks demurely that she cannot help thinking it "more natural to have flowers grow out of the head than fruit." Evidently the great actor, Garrick, was of

the same opinion, for it was he that brought the fashion to an end by appearing on the stage with a great mass of vegetables on his head and a carrot hanging over each ear.

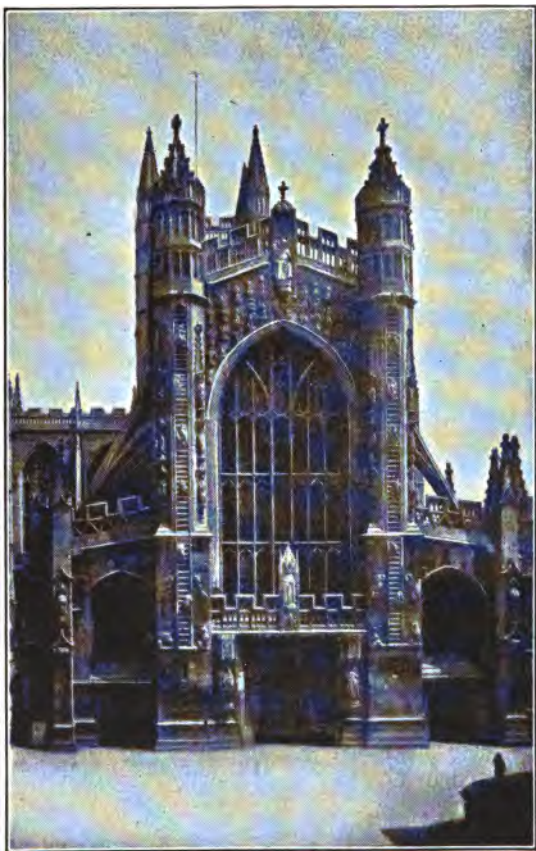
In the days when Jane Austen was writing her cheerful letters from Bath, full of bits of clever gossip about friends and fashions for Cassandra's amusement, she little dreamed that that gay resort of the frivolous would be the next home of her family. The thought of so great a change brought a shock at first—she is said to have fainted at the news of her parents' sudden decision—but soon recovering her usual cheerfulness, she reflected that the balls at Basingstoke, the nearest town to Steventon, were certainly "on the decline" and gayly set herself to aid in the busy preparations of the household. Yet strangely enough, in parting from Steventon, she seemed to part, too, with her early zest in writing. The three stories that were already finished she carried with her. The other novels belong to a later period when her home was once more within the friendly borders of her native county of Hampshire.

It seems likely enough that, had her youthful novels found a publisher in those early years, the list of volumes to Jane Austen's credit might have

been longer and the world just so much the richer. But none of her friends or kinsfolk had cast their lot in life near the paths that lead to literature, and so, for all her cleverness and quickness of wit, she could only put her manuscripts carefully away, trusting with bright-eyed courage that some happy chance might one day bring the children of her brain before the world in a becoming dress of print. To most writers the waiting-time would have seemed long enough, for it lasted fifteen years. But they were years so full of cheerful interest in home and friends and of keen enjoyment of little journeys and stray bits of fun and merriment that when "Sense and Sensibility" was published at last Jane Austen was in high health and spirits, for all the world as if she had determined to prove the truth of the wise lines sung by the peddler in the "Winter's Tale":

"Your merry heart goes all the way,  
Your sad tires in a mile-a.

Perhaps, after all, her happiness in the appearance of the stories that she had written when scarcely more than a girl was all the keener for having been so long delayed. She writes to Cassandra of the first of the new-old novels as, "my



BATH ABBEY

darling child S. and S.," and a little later is anxious to know whether her friends like the heroine of "Pride and Prejudice" as well as that spirited

girl deserves. Yet she laughs a little at her own eagerness even while she amuses herself by visiting the spring exhibitions of new portraits in London to see if she can discover a likeness of any of her heroines. To her great delight there is a picture that much resembles the beautiful Mrs. Bingley, "dressed in white with green ornaments," the very colors that she would have been sure were that young lady's favorites. And when Mrs. Darcy, who ought to be in yellow, is nowhere to be found, Jane Austen smiles to herself and reflects that the clever Elizabeth's husband would naturally prize her portrait too highly to allow it to be exhibited in public.

She would have been greatly astonished, the country rector's daughter who even in her girlhood pictured the life about her so cleverly, could she have lifted the veil of the future long enough to learn that the famous Miss Mitford, when at Bath, lived more in the company of Jane Austen's characters than of its flesh-and-blood citizens; that the great Macaulay and his sister delighted in speaking to each other in the language of her characters instead of their own; and that Tennyson, when visiting Lyme, the scene of the thrilling adventure of Louisa Musgrove in "Persuasion," said with much

indignation to the people who wished to point out to him the landing-place of the Duke of Monmouth: "Don't talk to me of the Duke of Monmouth; show me the exact spot where Louisa Musgrove fell!"



## JOHN RUSKIN

NEARLY a century ago a tiny yellow-haired boy was taken to the London studio of the famous artist, William Northcote, to have his portrait painted. It was a pleasant surprise to the painter, then a very old man, and perhaps not overpatient, to find his three-year-old sitter able to remain perfectly still, requiring no one to keep him amused, and happily interested in watching the fascinating process by which the paint was squeezed out of the tubes on to the palette. But even more remarkable than the small boy's stillness was his choice of a background for his picture. "Blue hills," he replied promptly, when asked what he would like to have painted in the distance. He had been taken to Scotland, had seen the distant hills there, and had heard his nurse's song about "Scotland's barefooted lassies and her mountains so blue." Yet not many three-year-olds would have cared so much for their memories of pleasant places, and, reading this story of John Ruskin in his babyhood, we can see how early he had learned the lesson he taught through-



out his life—the love of beauty in nature and in art.

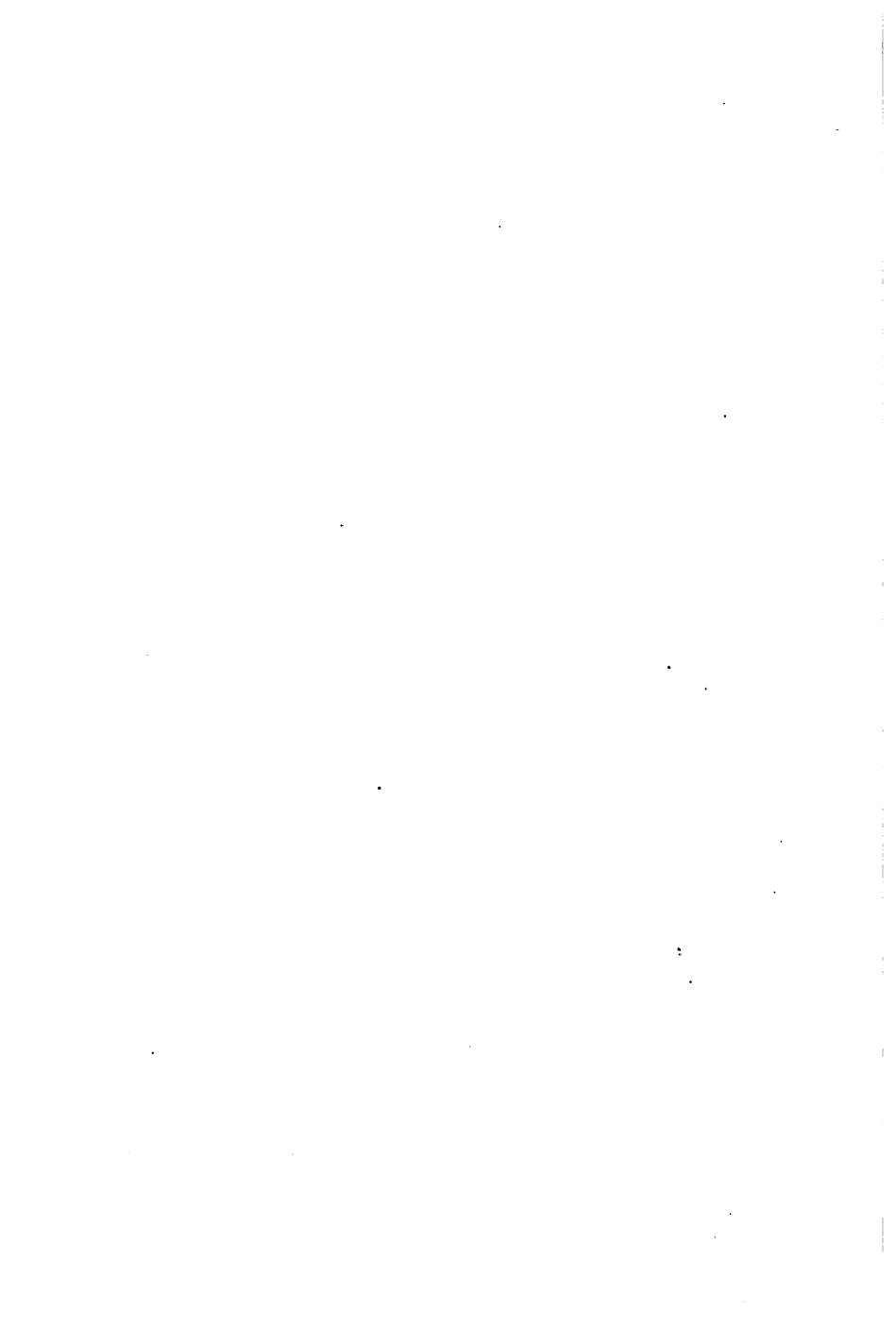
It was in one of the dingiest and dullest regions of smoke-dimmed London that the great modern lover of beauty first learned to look for the sunlight. Number 54 Hunter Street, Brunswick Square, which a memorial tablet marks as Ruskin's birthplace, is an ugly house in an ugly row, consisting of what he once described as "square cavities in brick walls." His second home in Herne Hill, a southern suburb of London, then quite countrylike, was, however, such as he would have chosen for himself. There he could "know a garden and a tree," as all childhood should, and look across wide, open spaces to the rolling Norwood hills. One wonders whether, if all the days of his childhood had been bounded by monotonous gray walls, he would in later life have discerned so much meaning in architecture, and have found the same sermons in stones. But even if the sermons had been different, it is not likely that they would have been less wise; for throughout his life he thought as earnestly about unlovely things as he admired passionately everything that possessed beauty.

The boy who was born in dreary Hunter Street



**John Ruskin**

After the portrait by George Richmond, R.A., in the National  
Portrait Gallery



on February 8, 1819, did not inherit nobility of descent, if rank and title are what make descent noble. Both his father and his mother, who were first cousins, came of a plain-living simple Scottish family, none of whom was known to the world for anything but honorable industry. Yet John Ruskin's father was noble in the best sense of the word. The son of an Edinburgh merchant who had been unfortunate in business and who had died heavily in debt, he took up the burden under which his father had sunk, and toiled unwearingly so that no one might be the loser by his father's misfortunes. He was no longer a very young man when, after nine years, his task was completed. But not until then did he marry, although years before he had told his cousin, Margaret Cox, that his hope was to make her his wife. In the lesser matters of life, as in this greater one of marriage, it was the habit of John Ruskin's father to think of his duty before his wishes. And so it came about that the famous son was able to write for his father's tombstone the inscription, "He was an entirely honest merchant," believing that he could find no truer praise, and none higher.

It is pleasant to know that Mr. Ruskin's effort to clear his father's name brought him a reward

in money as well as in honor. His great intelligence and industry soon made him one of the most prosperous wine merchants in the country. No shadow of financial trouble ever again crossed his life. He never ceased to find pleasure in furthering the plans and projects of his only son, and at his death left a fortune which made John Ruskin a very wealthy man. The son spent his wealth as unselfishly as his father had acquired it honorably, and at the end of his long life of generous giving possessed nothing more than what his pen had earned for him.

In one of the last books that he published, Ruskin, the great painter of word-pictures, has left us a wonderful picture of his own childhood. The title of the book is "*Præterita*"—Things Past. But to a true artist nothing need ever seem wholly past; nor indeed does the life that Ruskin tells of in "*Præterita*." He remembered his first home in London as clearly as though the experiences of his babyhood were close to him, instead of a lifetime away. Not all of these experiences were wholly bright or pleasant. Yet he was grateful even for those that made his early years seem somber, believing that they, too, had done their share toward developing the gifts that set him apart from other

men and made him a teacher honored in his day and generation.

Ruskin's mother was a woman of strong character, who, though deeply devoted to her little son, brought him up not only with great strictness, but with what would appear sternness to us of the twentieth century. He was carefully protected, then as later—much too carefully, he thought, for in a letter written in manhood he confesses with regret that he was never allowed to row or to ride for fear of accidents. But he was promptly punished, not only when he was disobedient—one wonders of what disobedience the docile little fellow could ever have been guilty—but if he was at all fretful or careless. Toys and sweets were forbidden delights in his nursery. Once a kindly aunt, who did not share Mrs. Ruskin's views on the training of children, presented him with a pair of splendidly-dressed Punch and Judy dolls. They could dance when they were tied to the leg of a chair, he says, almost wistfully, writing about them in "*Præterita*," sixty years later. He had only one glimpse of these scarlet-and-gold marvels, however, for after his aunt's visit was over Punch and Judy disappeared forever, and the little boy was once more left to find his chief indoor amusement in

examining the patterns and colors of the nursery carpet, and his rarest delight in the filling of the water-carts in the street. As for sweets, the fact that Mrs. Ruskin once gave her small son three raisins is carefully set down in his recollections as a solitary and remarkable occurrence.

The picture drawn of Mrs. Ruskin in the beginning of "Præterita" may seem to represent her as hard. Yet it is certain that her rigid ordering of her only son's life was due not to hardness, but to an unyielding sense of duty as she understood it. Of no woman that even seemed hard to those that knew her could her son have said, as Ruskin says, that "the ideas of success at school or college put before me by my masters were ignoble and comfortless, in comparison with my mother's regretful blame or simple praise." And that the stern discipline did not result in much hardship is made clear in another part of "Præterita," in which he says "that of absolute happiness I had the share of about a quarter of a million of average people all to myself."

There are one or two stories about Mrs. Ruskin and her servants which show her in a kindly light. No one who had grown old while working in the Ruskin home was ever sent away; so that as time

went on, there came to be a number of aged women servants in the household, most of whom were able to do little or nothing. This was taken quite as a matter of course by Mrs. Ruskin, who desired no credit for her kindness to these faithful helpers who could no longer help. A caller, one day, noticing one of these old people waiting about, inquired what special service she performed. "She, my dear, puts out the dessert," answered Mrs. Ruskin, drawing herself up stiffly, as though to make an end of the subject. Her son's nurse, Anne, who had been Mr. Ruskin's nurse as well, was as unamiable in speech and as obstinate as she was faithful. She and her mistress grew old together, and Ruskin tells how Anne, whose obstinacy did not lessen with time, would each morning take special pains to set his mother's teacup precisely on the wrong side of the table, and how Mrs. Ruskin would never forget solemnly to remark afterwards, in biblical language, that "if ever a woman was possessed of a devil, Anne was that woman." But Anne remained a privileged and honored member of the household to the end of a long life of seventy-two years.

To compensate for the absence of toys and sweets, there were many delightful and unusual ex-



periences in Ruskin's childhood. First of all, the Herne Hill house had its garden, rich in all sorts of beauty of tree and flower and fruit. The little boy who had learned to find pleasure in observing the traceries of the patterns in carpets and wall-paper was far better able, than most children, to enjoy the wonders of the outdoor world. "I was as fond of nature at five years old as I am to-day," he says in a letter written in later years. The lovely garden, with its lilac and laburnum, its hedge of gooseberry and currant bushes, its apple, pear, cherry, and mulberry trees, was a sort of Paradise to him, differing from Eden, as he says a little ruefully, "in that all the fruit was forbidden, and there were no companionable beasts." He could hardly have minded leaving the fruit untouched, for he was quite accustomed to see all sorts of dainties without being permitted to taste them, and he learned very early to love fruit trees chiefly for the sake of their beauty at blossoming-time. But the absence of friendly animals was a real grief to the solitary little boy, whose life was so carefully protected and regulated that merely to watch the free gambolings of an animal would have been a delight. He did his best to make up for this deficiency in his beautiful garden by interesting him-

self in the ants' nests that he found in the paths, and in trying to tame any bird that showed itself trustful. But the distressingly tidy gardener always swept the fascinating mounds out of the neat walks, and the cats made every bird-taming experiment result in a tragedy, so that there was nothing for it but to make the best of the solitude.

One of the few occasions on which he came near to being disobedient was when he tried, "in passionate effort," he says, to gain permission to play with some lion-cubs in a menagerie. Then a little later, having been allowed to make friends with the great Newfoundland watch-dog who lived in the stable, he had a misadventure which might well have changed his love of dogs into fear. Coming home after a long absence, he made haste to visit the stable to see and to pat Lion, who, evidently possessing a poor memory, flew at the little intruder and bit his lip badly. His only feeling on being carried into the house to have his injury attended to was concern lest Lion should be made to pay for his lapse of memory by being sent away. He did not love dogs one whit the less because of Lion's failure to understand his friendly advances; nor indeed, in later years, did he work less earnestly

to help men toward happiness because of their failure to understand all his teachings.

The Creed he wrote to be signed by the members of the Company of St. George, a society which he founded half a century after his plea for Lion, contains the following article: "I will not kill nor hurt any living creature needlessly, nor destroy any beautiful thing, but will strive to save and comfort all gentle life, and guard and perfect all natural beauty upon the earth." It was the creed of his childhood as well as of his manhood.

Many another English child could roam about a garden almost, if not quite, as beautiful as Ruskin's at Herne Hill, but there were few children who had the good fortune to be taken on such delightful holiday jaunts as his. There were neither railroads nor motor-cars in those days, and the journeys were made, in peaceful and leisurely fashion, in a traveling-chariot. Reading of the pleasant days little John Ruskin spent in the roomy carriage, seated comfortably on the cushioned box containing his clothes, and plying a silver-mounted whip on his father's legs in imitation of the post-boy's procedure with the horses, one ceases to wonder at the dislike of railroads and steam-engines ex-

pressed so often and so emphatically in Ruskin's books.

For two delightful summer months every year the entire Ruskin family,—Mr. and Mrs. Ruskin and John, with Nurse Anne established outside on the little platform called the “dickey,”—would drive through more than half a score of counties on their holiday tour. The trip was more than a mere jaunt for Mr. Ruskin, who would during these journeys take the year's orders for wine from his country customers. But he understood pictures as well as wines, and never passed by a castle or a house in which there was a fine painting to be seen without visiting it, “paying the surliest housekeeper into patience,” his son tells us, “until we had examined it to our heart's content.” In this way and thus early the little boy who was later to tell the world so much about the meaning of architecture and painting saw scores upon scores of English mansions and manors. One of the lessons that he learned from seeing the grandeur that belonged to England's historic past was, he says, “that it was probably much better to live in a small house and have Warwick Castle to be astonished at, than to live in Warwick Castle and have nothing to be astonished at.” Even in those days he knew that

beautiful things are far more ours when we admire them rightly than when we merely possess them.

These happy journeys sometimes took the little traveler as far north as Scotland. Then came the brightest days of all the holiday time, for in the picturesque old Scottish city of Perth lived an aunt, a gentle, pious widow, whom he loved dearly, and whose house was another home to him. In this home, indeed, he enjoyed far more freedom than at Herne Hill. The family of cousins, or at least the two little girls—the bigger boy cousins paid but slight regard to their little London visitor—gave him the companionship for which he always longed. His mother, too, forgot her strictness, so that he and Jessie and Mary were allowed to do exactly as they pleased. Jessie, dark-eyed and clever, was his favorite. In that godly Scottish household, where there were Scripture examinations every-Sunday evening in which all the children took part, the leadership was invariably with Jessie or John, the elder brothers and Mary being always distanced by one or the other of the wise little pair. Since they were well matched in Scripture knowledge, they thereupon decided to be married when they were old enough. Bright little Jessie did not, however, live long enough either to break or to

keep her promise of marriage. She died when John was nine, only a little while before her mother, and Mary, four years older than Jessie, came to Herne Hill to share the Ruskin home and to be John's adopted sister.

The new inmate of the household was a friendly, sensible, but not overclever Scotch lassie, with no special talents except a taste for drawing. In spite of her fourteen years, therefore, she was very far from being able to keep pace with her little ten-year-old cousin, whose quick mind had already led him to take interest in many kinds of knowledge. He had taught himself to read very early, and found reading such a delightful amusement that at five years old he would send for books from the circulating library. To one book, however, which did not come from the circulating library, he owed the best part of his early education. Thanks to his mother's deep religious feeling and her determined way of accomplishing any piece of work she set out to do, he gained, very early in his boyhood, such a full and thorough knowledge of the Bible as few persons of any age ever possess. Daily, as soon as he could read at all, the reading aloud of two or three chapters from the Bible with his mother became the beginning of his morning's

work. This was always followed by the task of learning a chapter or a psalm by heart, so that, what with reading the entire Bible after this fashion about once a year, and never being allowed to forget a single verse of what had once been got by heart, every word of the Scriptures became, as he says, "familiar to his ear in habitual music." It is a music that echoes through all his work, even his earliest.

Scott and Homer were the writers he knew first, and always loved best. Homer, in Pope's translation, he found out for himself, but his knowledge of Scott came to him in another fashion. Mr. and Mrs. Ruskin seldom visited or received visitors, and their evenings were invariably spent over books. Their son draws a quaint picture of the family group at Herne Hill, during the long, quiet, closing hours of the day, the father reading aloud the wonderful stories of the Wizard of the North, the mother peacefully knitting and listening, and the grave, wise little boy, seated in his special corner with his own special table before him, eagerly following the fortunes of the devoted Fergus MacIvor or the luckless Amy Robsart, and learning from the great and good Sir Walter the lesson of passionate loyalty he too was to teach in his turn. Though it

was not long before he came to admire the poetry of both Byron and Pope, he never deposed Scott from his rank of chief favorite, and toward the close of his life found the Waverley Novels just as delightful as when he had first known them, a five-year-old boy, shut away in his niche in the Herne Hill drawing-room.

Besides the Bible reading and study, the only lesson in these early days was Latin grammar—a very little of it—learned willingly and proudly from a book that Mr. Ruskin had used when a pupil in the famous High School at Edinburgh. “That’s a Scotch thing,” said the master of a school to which John was sent some years later, upon being shown “Adam’s Latin Grammar.” The foolishly contemptuous reference to the book which the little boy had studied with such pride cost the teacher his pupil’s allegiance. After that scornful remark, Ruskin, he tells us, learned what his master gave him to study only because he had to do it.

Long before the days of going to school, however, he had taken delight in trying to make real books, after a fashion of his own, printing his words neatly, and illustrating his pages with sketches. His parents kept all these efforts, even from the very first, so that when their author



was an old man past sixty, and one of the greatest writers of his day, he was able to look at the yellow pages he had laboriously covered so many years before, and see how firmly his early steps had been set in his chosen path. Even as a child he hardly ever tried to write stories, and in fact always believed himself to be without the gift of story-telling, though the delightful "King of the Golden River," which he wrote to please a little girl, might seem to be strong proof to the contrary. But from the little poem beginning "Papa, how pretty those icicles are!" which belongs to his seventh year, to the last line of "Præterita," he seldom wrote anything which did not show that he loved nature and sought to love it with understanding.

At about the age of eleven, lessons from tutors began to be added to his mother's Bible readings and the Latin Grammar. An amiable clergyman taught him some—not too much—Greek; his cousin Mary's drawing teacher gave him lessons which both helped him and hindered him; and a dull but conscientious master of a neighboring "young gentleman's preparatory school," introduced him to French grammar and mathematics. Next came a brief taste of school life at an academy where, since all the boys but himself made a point of learning

as little as they could, the first place in scholarship was cheerfully yielded to him. The school seems to have made little impression on him, perhaps because he was only a day scholar, or possibly because his pride had been hurt at the outset by the master's sneer at the Scotchness of his old friend, the Latin Grammar.

At about this time Mr. and Mrs. Ruskin invited the son of a highly respected neighbor to share John's comfortable study, so that the twelve-year-old student might have a companion of his own age. Though the boys became good comrades they were hardly close friends. Yet John seems to have had no other friends or even companions, with the exception of various boy and girl cousins, and to only one of these, the bright and clever Charles, whose death by drowning saddened all who knew him, did he ever become deeply attached. And so, when before his schoolboy days were quite over four charming girls, half French, half Spanish, the daughters of his father's foreign partner, were suddenly quartered upon the Herne Hill household as visitors, it is not to be wondered at that they seemed to the shy boy bright creatures from an unknown world. Nor is it more to be wondered at that he should have thought of the fifteen-year-old Adèle

as his own special fairy princess, capable of being won by him if only he could learn to play the part of prince successfully. Knowing no other way of winning her favor, he spent his best efforts in composing an Italian tale about a bandit and a maiden, at which, however, though it was printed in a magazine, Adèle only laughed. He wrote poetry, too, about her, and planned a Venetian tragedy in her honor; but in the meantime Adèle went back with her sisters to Paris, leaving John to the double task of learning to endure her absence and preparing to enter Oxford University. She remained his fairy princess until four years later, when she married a French gentleman. As time went on, she and her sisters came to be very proud of their friendship with the great writer, and all the children of their family were taught to know and love his books.

It had always been the hope of Ruskin's parents that his entering the University would be the first step toward becoming the greatest clergyman of his time. His father's not precisely modest expectations of him were, the son says, in a spirit of affectionate mockery, "that he should enter at college into the best society, take all the prizes every year and a double first to finish with; marry Lady Clara Vere de Vere; write poetry as good as

Byron's, only pious, . . . be made at forty Bishop of Winchester and at fifty Primate of England."

It was not entirely unreasonable, after all, for fond parents to cherish such hopes for a boy who had given so much early promise of greatness. Before he was three he had often preached a sermon of his own after being taken to church—a sermon which, short but wise, always began with, "People, be good." But his sermons were not to be preached from a pulpit, although he was indeed in later life a preacher of a sort. His lifework, strangely enough, was determined for him by a book which he received on his thirteenth birthday from his father's English partner. The volume, a copy of Rogers's poem, "Italy," with engraved illustrations by the famous landscape painter Turner, proved strangely fascinating to him. Beginning at once to copy the illustrations, he came by degrees to understand the meaning and value of Turner's work. Through this loving study of Turner, the thirteen-year-old boy found his way into the enchanted realm of art, and twelve years later, in the first volume of his great book, "Modern Painters," he began to teach the world the lesson of sincerity in art that Turner had taught him.

Though Turner's wonderful engraving of "The

Alps at Daybreak" had set the little disciple longing for the sight of the distant Swiss mountains, it was to another English artist that he owed his first vision of the glory of the Alps. Mr. Ruskin had brought home a book of Flemish and German sketches by Samuel Prout, and Mrs. Ruskin, watching her husband's interest in the foreign scenes, suggested, "Why not go and see some of them?" And so that year the Ruskin household—Cousin Mary a part of it now—went farther afield for their holiday, traveling up the Rhine into Switzerland and Italy, and homeward through "the pleasant land of France."

If the British holiday jaunts had been enjoyable, this first foreign tour was a sheer delight. The horses' heads seemed, Ruskin says, set straight for Mont Blanc as soon as the travelers had landed at Calais. It was a leisurely tour, like all pleasure journeys in that slow-moving time, with fifty miles for the longest day's journey, and the quiet hours at the end of the day for wandering around the picturesque towns and villages to sketch and make notes for the travelers' journal which Ruskin always kept. Some of these notes gave him the subject for an essay, "On the Causes of the Color of the Waters of the Rhine," which was his first prose

work to be printed, and which appeared in *The Magazine of Natural History* when he was only fifteen.

But it was his first glimpse of the Alps that made this foreign tour a landmark in his life. We know that even in his babyhood, surrounded by ugly London streets, he had loved and remembered the distant Scottish hills, and in all his English journeys he had reveled in the wild mountainous scenery of the Welsh border and the Lake Country. The beauty of the Alps, however, dawned upon him like a vision of another world; and telling of his first sight of their glory from a garden in the town of Schaffhausen, he says: "I went down that evening from the garden-terrace of Schaffhausen, with my destiny fixed in all of it that was to be sacred and useful." The snow-clad Alps had given him some of their own strength, so that he might teach the meaning of their beauty, and bring into the lives of his fellow-men the freedom and truth and purity that always seem nearer to us among the mountains.

A few weeks before his eighteenth birthday, Ruskin, who by this time had seen most of the beautiful cities on the continent of Europe, began his student life in Oxford, the most beautiful city

in England. The college of which he was a member was Christ Church, then as now the most aristocratic of all the colleges of which the great university is composed. His father had nevertheless



CHRIST CHURCH, OXFORD

chosen it for him, believing that nothing could be beyond the merits of the son in whose attainments he took such pride. Nor was the new collegian entered as an ordinary member of Christ Church College. In those days the payment of an additional fee entitled a student to the rank, now abolished, of gentleman-commoner. Among the special privi-

leges to which gentlemen-commoners were entitled was freedom from an entrance examination, which was a point to be considered; for though Ruskin at eighteen probably knew more about art than any other member of the college, his Greek was more limited in quantity than was convenient. But an even greater advantage was the beautiful flowing silk gown worn by the gentlemen-commoners, which contrasted so favorably with the ugly garment of the commoners who might not call themselves gentlemen. The silk gown turned the scale, and John Ruskin, the son of the London wine merchant, found himself a gentleman-commoner at Christ Church and consequently a member of the most aristocratic group of young men at Oxford.

He fared very well indeed, on the whole, among his new associates. At first, of course, there were occasions when the difference between the studious "home-boy" and the youths who had been to Eton and Harrow made itself felt. One early experience he relates, evidently enjoying the recollection. It was the custom of the tutors to require a weekly essay from the undergraduates, and to have the best of each week's crop read aloud on Saturday afternoon, to an unwilling audience of students. Ruskin was, as he says, not surprised, though much



flattered, at being selected to read his essay on one such occasion. But he *was* greatly surprised to find that his impressive and beautiful sentences had aroused, not admiration, but indignant disgust in the body of gentlemen-commoners seated before him. They spared no effort to explain to him the crime of which he had been guilty. No gentleman-commoner ought, they declared, to lower his dignity by writing more than twelve lines of four words each on such an occasion, and no one but a green-horn would dream of putting any meaning into what he wrote; while the leaders of their august body preferred the method of paying a bookish college servant or learned shopkeeper to save them all trouble in the matter. But Ruskin's worst fault was that he had forced them to listen to an essay that had taken a full quarter of an hour to read! It was altogether an astonishing experience for the well-intentioned newcomer, but at the end it was quite clear to him that there were certain things that the ancient order of gentlemen-commoners could not and would not endure.

It did not take very long, however, for his fellow-collegians to do justice to his talents. Before he had spent a year at the University he was described in the letter of another undergraduate as a "very

wonderful gentleman-commoner who draws wonderfully." Not only the art-lovers, but the students of science as well, soon claimed him as one of themselves. A famous geologist helped the future author of "The Ethics of the Dust" in his studies about minerals, and Henry Acland, one of the older undergraduates and later one of the leading physiologists of the country, "took him affectionately in hand" and made him happy by offering him companionship which became a well-nigh lifelong friendship.

It seems strange to us, and must have seemed stranger to the Oxonians of that day, that Mrs. Ruskin should have come to live in Oxford while her son was a student there. For the entire three years of his college career she did so, however, living cheerfully in lodgings in the High Street, and returning only in holiday time to the well-ordered home for which her housewifely soul must often have yearned. Perhaps few youths at college would have appreciated motherly devotion shown in such a form, but Ruskin was only grateful for his mother's presence, and never missed or wished to miss making the daily journey from his college rooms to the seven-o'clock tea-drinking in the High Street. Each Saturday Mr. Ruskin journeyed from London

to join wife and son at Oxford. But the parents would take no walks with their son, nor ever be seen with him except at church, wishing to spare him any jests that his friends might indulge in at the expense of so carefully-guarded a collegian.

To the credit of his companions, he had no jests to endure. Sometimes, indeed, he was prevented from obeying his mother in all respects. She was anxious that he should not keep late hours, and he would accordingly "sport his oak" outside his door, in token that he was not to be disturbed. Some of the gayer spirits among his friends, however, not dismayed by the closed door, would, when inclined for a social evening, climb in at his window. "They say midshipmen and Oxonians have more lives than a cat," lamented Mrs. Ruskin in a letter to a friend, "and they have need of them if they run such risks."

Before the second year of Ruskin's Oxford career was ended he had realized a part, at least, of his parents' hopes by winning one of the highest honors conferred by the University upon an undergraduate. The Newdigate prize for poetry was, and still is, competed for eagerly by all students with poetical gifts. College prize poems are often spoken of slightly, it is true; yet the lists of prize-winners

both at Oxford and Cambridge contain the names of more than one poet of the first rank, and success in the competition for the prizes means admission to a distinguished company. Since some of Ruskin's early poems had already been published, and had earned high praise, it was natural for his father to wish Oxford to know him as a poet. Accordingly, he became a competitor for the Newdigate, but did not succeed at his first attempt, the examiners preferring poetry more carefully finished than his was apt to be. With a persistence which in later years he rather regretted as a waste of effort he tried a second and a third time, finally carrying off the prize with a poem on an Eastern subject. He was required to recite his poem in public, and did so quite successfully, although his mother, full of loving concern lest he should break down, could not bring herself to be present at his triumph.

The prize which Ruskin had earned at nineteen was not the only honor to be conferred upon him by his university. He did not, indeed, win the "double first" that his father had dreamed of, for illness interrupted his studies for more than a year, and when he returned to them he was beyond the age at which he could be given such a distinction. Thirty years after he had won the Newdigate, how-

ever, he came back to Oxford to deliver lectures which were heard by greater throngs of eager listeners than the ancient halls had ever before held.

But it was not as a poet that he spoke. Although he never ceased to love poetry, or lost the power to write it, the first place in his heart belonged to nature—to the mountains and seas and forests that had stirred him to such deep feeling in his childhood—and to the art that could mirror nature truly. And so he had chosen it as his task to speak and write of the beauty in nature, and of art as it explains that beauty. Then, because he had come to believe that men could produce no art that was beautiful unless they first made beautiful the daily life of those who toil, he used his great gifts to set forth the duty that man owes his fellow-man. And like the Parson in the “*Canterbury Tales*,” of whom the poet Chaucer wrote,

“ And Cristës lore, and the apostles twelve,  
He taught, but first he followed it himselve; ”

Ruskin taught his lesson not only in noble words, but in unselfish deeds.

The Oxford lectures which were given year after year, until Ruskin grew to be an old man, are full



JOHN RUSKIN MEMORIAL AT DERWENTWATER

of wonderful and varied knowledge. Yet the thought that runs through them all is the same that moved him in his youth to write "The King of the Golden River," the beautiful fairy tale whose gentle little hero regains a lost inheritance through the power of pity and of love.



## AUTHOR'S NOTE

*In the following list are included biographies and other books that will be found especially helpful to readers who care to know the story of the early years of famous authors.*

SCOTT: J. G. Lockhart's "Life of Scott," a masterpiece of biography by Scott's son-in-law; a shorter "Life of Scott" by Andrew Lang, himself a distinguished Scotchman; "Edinburgh Under Sir Walter Scott," by W. T. Fyfe; "Sir Walter Scott's Friends," by Florence MacCunn.

STEVENSON: "Life of Robert Louis Stevenson," by Graham Balfour, Stevenson's cousin; "Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson," edited by his friend, Sir Sidney Colvin; "Robert Louis Stevenson's Edinburgh Days" and "The Stevenson Originals," by Eve Blantyre Simpson, an early friend of "R. L. S."; "Robert Louis Stevenson," by H. Bellyse Baildon, a schoolmate of Stevenson; "Stevensoniana," a collection of anecdotes and sketches, edited by J. A. Hammerton; "Robert Louis Stevenson," by Dr. A. H. Japp, the friend who brought about the publication of "Treasure Island."

THACKERAY: The introductions written by Thackeray's daughter, Lady Ritchie, to the "Biographical Edition" of Thackeray's works. (It was Thackeray's wish that no formal biography of him should be written.)

DICKENS: "Life of Charles Dickens," by John Forster, the novelist's closest friend; other "Lives" by Percy Fitzgerald and F. T. Marzials; "Childhood and Youth of Charles Dickens," by Robert Langton, a resident of Rochester.



TENNYSON: "Alfred Lord Tennyson, a Memoir by His Son"; "Records of Tennyson, Ruskin, and Browning," by Lady Ritchie; "Memories of the Tennysons" and "Highways and Byways in Lincolnshire," by Canon H. H. Rawnsley, a lifelong friend of the Tennyson family.

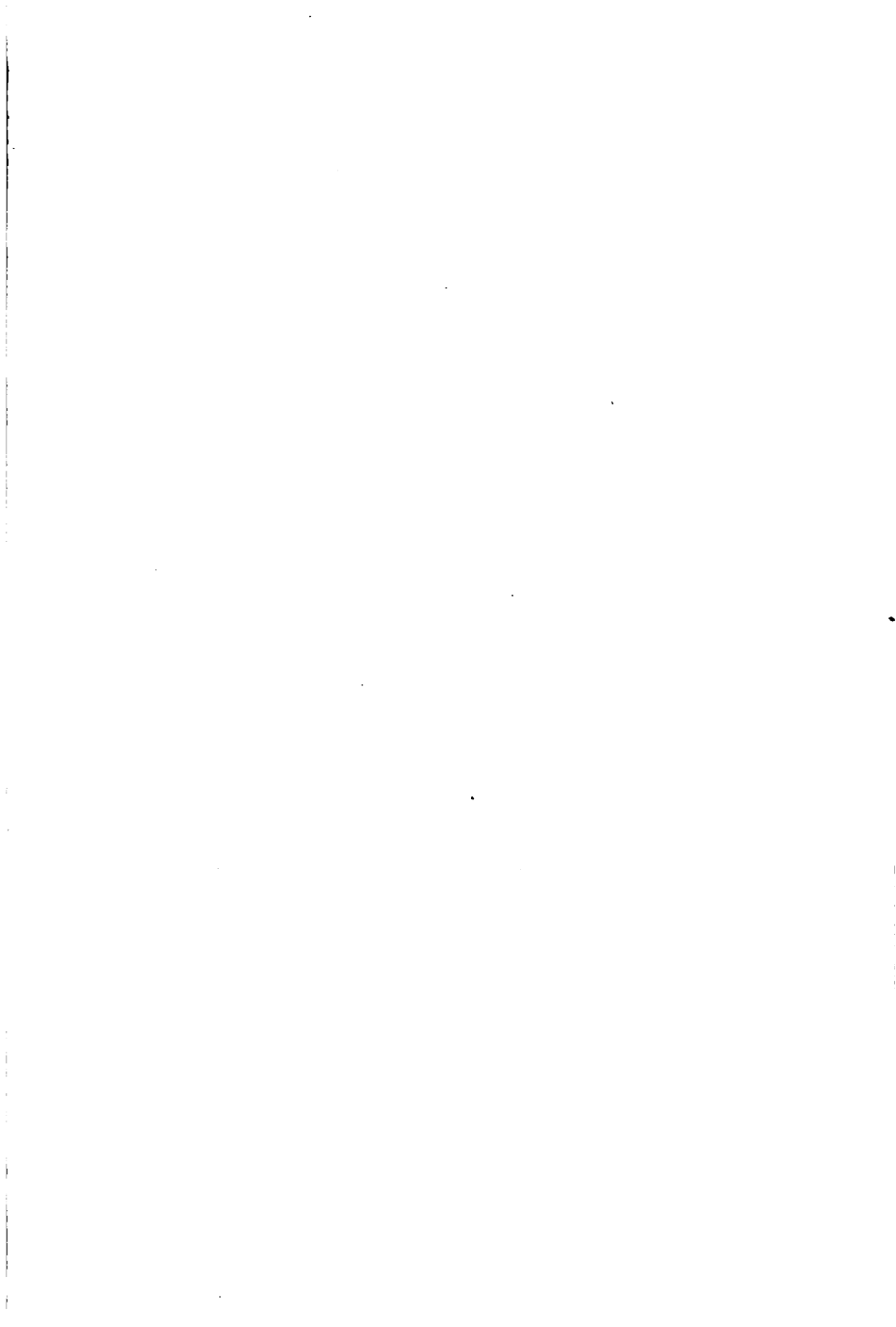
THE BROWNING: "Life of Robert Browning," by Mrs. Sutherland Orr; "Robert Browning: His Life and Works," by W. H. Griffin; "The Brownings, Their Life and Art," by Lillian Whiting.

CHARLOTTE BRONTË: "Life of Charlotte Brontë," by Mrs. Gaskell, a sympathetic biography by the author of "Cranford"; shorter "Lives" by Sir T. Wemyss Reid and Augustine Birrell; "The Brontës, Their Life and Letters," and "The Brontës and Their Circle," by Clement Shorter; "In the Footsteps of the Brontës," by Mrs. E. H. Chadwick; "The Brontës," by Flora Masson.

LAMB: "Life of Charles Lamb," by Alfred Ainger; "Life of Lamb," by E. V. Lucas; "In the Footprints of Charles Lamb," by Benjamin Ellis Martin.

JANE AUSTEN: "Jane Austen and Her Times," by G. E. Mitton; "Life and Letters of Jane Austen," by W. and R. A. Austen-Leigh, members of the Austen family; "Jane Austen, Her Homes and Her Friends," by Constance Hill; "The Story of Jane Austen's Life," by Oscar Fay Adams.

RUSKIN: "Præterita," Ruskin's autobiography; "Life and Work of John Ruskin," by W. G. Collingwood, Ruskin's secretary; "Life of John Ruskin," by Sir E. Tyas Cook, Ruskin's pupil and friend.



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